

LONDON SOCIETY.

MAY, 1862.

MY FIRST PICTURE.

A Tale.

IT was luncheon-time in the South Kensington Museum Female School. I threaded my way through the deserted life class, making a rather perilous journey among spread easels and empty seats, having a care of uncorked bottles of turpentine and sticky paint brushes. I had purchased a cut of bread for the sum of one halfpenny from the attendant at the luncheon-table, and turned my back upon currant buns and ham sandwiches. Now, crust in hand, I made my critical expedition, reviewing some score pieces of canvas, on each of which brush and palette had performed a distinct variation upon the features of that poor model who had just laid aside his Tyrolese hat, and descended from his draperied dais for a glass of beer, and a turn in the open air.

'Whose is this?' I asked, hardly repressing a smile as I turned from the easel to a little fat girl, whom I found eating a cheesecake at my elbow.

'Is it not a guy?' said she. 'Don't you know that new girl? Short hair and a grey dress. She can't draw the figure at all, and she's attempting the most difficult works in the school. Law! you should see her Diacobolus!'

'I think I have seen her,' I said; 'I remember remarking that she had a beautiful head.'

'La!' cried my little fat friend once more; and stared at me with all her round eyes. And then be-thinking herself of another cheesecake, she charged in among the easels, and miraculously escaped

from the room without doing damage.

I stood before the daubed sketch, oddly attracted. Truly it was a curious production. There was a wild lack of drawing, a wild ignorance of all the laws of painting. Glazing pigments had been used without any foundation whatever; the strange tones on the cheek portrayed not flesh, and yet there was a triumphant vividness of design in the colouring that fascinated me. The glowing faults seemed dashed on the canvas with a hasty might of untaught effort. I thought, 'It must be a rich passionate soul that has flung here this maimed reflection of its colour dream.'

The students came trooping in to their afternoon work, while the clatter of plates in the passage announced that the attendants were taking back their empty basket to that restaurant at the museum entrance. I stood aside a while, watching for the 'grey dress and short hair.' She came in.

I think most students must at some time have experienced that sickening sensation, when, after having indulged during hours of work in the sweet wild dream that at last they are shadowing forth their idea, giving to the eye some sparkles of ore from the burning mine within them, they leave their canvas for a time, still dreaming of success while absent, to return, and with freshened eye perceive all their poverty, all their error staring at them with blank truth.

This was the shock which flushed

and whitened the new girl's face as she came before her first attempt in the life class. Lonely and suffering she stood in the busy crowd, the half-raised brush drooping in her fingers. While I watched, a smile from some one passing finished her agony. She snatched the canvas from the easel, gathered up her brushes, and with burning cheeks and proudly-downcast eyes, quitted the class.

Ten minutes afterwards I was cutting my chalk in the Antique Room. The 'grey' girl was whispering and laughing extravagantly with a certain fair-haired romping lass who was the wildest madcap in the school. Absorbed students raised their heads and smiled, as peal after peal of merriment broke from the corner where the two sat. Some one said, 'What *are* you two laughing at?' Whereupon the blonde lassie cried out, 'Oh! it's all Miss Barry. You never heard such absurd stories as she has been telling!' A few minutes after they fell to fencing with their mahl sticks, and were only warned to order by the appearance of a hand on the curtain which hung between us and the passage.

'Her disappointment does not prey upon her then,' I thought. And I almost sanctioned an impatient desire that my own failures could sit as lightly upon me. But in another moment I had retracted the half wish. 'No,' I mused, 'the dark hour heralds full dawn; if we want light we must live through shade.'

Next morning, when rather late I entered the room, I found Hilda Barry (the name on her easel) sitting before her drawing-board, pale and passive, with dark circles under her eyes. She seemed to be of a strangely uneven temperament.

Some weeks passed, during which a slight acquaintance sprang up between us. It began by her springing to my side one day, while I glanced over my sketch-book for a note.

'Do you design?' she said, eagerly. 'Oh, please let me see!'

'I try,' said I, with a smile, and showed her the book.

'I envy you,' she said, as she returned it, 'but it is not a wicked envy.'

'I hope not,' I answered, smiling again. And then she left me suddenly.

One day I sat watching her in one of her still moods. She is beautiful, I thought. There is a latent beauty which might be richly developed. An idea of colour drifted vaguely through my brain. At luncheon-time, when the room was empty, I went and sought in one of the painting rooms a certain piece of green drapery, with dashes of tawny light and olive shade. I arranged it studiously from a shelf behind the girl's seat. It will do, I thought: but stay; I substituted a red pencil of my own for the black one in Hilda Barry's port-crayon, and then I returned to my work. What a picture I had when the dark head shone against the rich sad folds! The outlines were good. The heavy hair swept short and curly from the round temples; the forehead had a pallor where the dusk curves met it; the dark eyes, often too dead and absent, now had a light, while the crimson pencil wrought beneath them. The cheek, too pale before, gained a ripeness against those tawny lights, and the full under lip shone in red relief from the olive shadows. It was a perfect little study—my vague idea of colour realized. Yes, there was exceeding beauty.

Presently she left the cast which she had been shading and went to her afternoon work at the Antinous. We seldom mustered more than half a dozen at a time in the Antique Room. We were in the model week, and it was a lecture day, so that the room, rather thin from the morning, emptied gradually, and at about half-past two o'clock I looked up and saw that its only occupants were Miss Barry and myself. As I glanced towards her, I was struck by her wobegone attitude and expression. She was sitting a little drooped, with her hands lying listlessly in her lap. Her face had that dull pallor, her eyes that shadowy heaviness that remind one of a winter rain cloud, when the desolate night is gathering among highlands.

I obeyed my quick impulse to go and speak to her.

'Are you unwell?' I asked.

'No, thank you,' she replied, stirring in the slightest degree from her still attitude.

I paused a moment. 'You have a headache, you are tired out. Do give up and go home!'

She shivered slightly. 'There is nothing at all the matter with me. I am as well as you. In perfect health.'

I would not be battled off so easily. That the girl suffered I knew. I might not have a right to pry into her trouble, but even a vague sympathy might soothe. I sat down before her, and leaned in a puzzle on my mahl stick.

'If you are not ill,' I said, 'in body, you are in mind. You have not been long at the school, and should not be so easily discouraged. We have all our dark days to grope through. Do you find the figure difficult?'

She glanced drearily at her board, with its false lines and smeared India-rubber marks. That rain-drift look swept across her eyes.

'I cannot see it,' she said. 'It looks right to me, as I have it. Mr. D— says it is wrong, but I cannot see it.'

'Let me try. I am not the best mistress, but I have been longer here than you.'

She rose quietly, and I took her seat, and fell to work with pencil and plummet. I gave a lesson as well as I could, showing her where the several points cut the line, how to make the figure stand, how to block out the proportions.

'I cannot go about it in that way,' she said. 'I want to dash at it, and have it at once.'

'But you cannot, you *must* creep before you can walk. It is slow with every one. Patience is a surer guide to success than genius.'

Her lips tightened again, and the desolate, half-terrified look came back into her eyes.

I wondered at her. I said, 'You should not be so very, very despondent.'

'It is nothing,' she said, with a return of self-command. 'I am always dull in the daylight. I cannot bear the day. I long for night—in the night I live.'

'You were very merry this morning.'

'Ah! that is excitement. It is to keep me from thinking. If Miss Gilbert were here now, I should be screaming with laughter.'

Strange girl! What should I say to her? Still I thought of my own heart struggles and burned with sympathy. I said, 'I know exactly how you feel. I have felt so. An utter despair paralyzing all my energies, a blindness, a languor, a bleak, bleak desolation of spirit. But believe me'—and I ventured to take her passive hand—'these are but the death-throes from which we shall awaken to a new life of light and power. For me, I have suffered all those dying agonies which are racking you at this moment, and now I feel that I am waking. Standing on yonder spot of mat where the chair is, I have swallowed oh! such bitter draughts—but they are healing me. It will be so with you, in a little; only wait and work.'

Thus I went on, making use of the unusual language that rushed upon me, because I knew that she best understood and hearkened to it. For two hours I preached, I scolded, I rallied and cheered her, till the bell startled us both.

I feared I had not effected much good withal. The drear mood never yielded; I got few words and a quiet good-bye when we parted. And yet my trial had relieved me. I felt so as I hastened home.

After that my interest in the 'grey' student increased daily. I felt also that though she had shown few signs of feeling my sympathy, yet she came oftener in my way, hovered near me, seldom speaking but seeming to like my neighbourhood. Neither of us made many advances, but a tacit friendship existed between us. She seemed to spend all her time at the school. She was there before me in the morning, she was the last to leave in the evening. If there were no lecture to be attended she would spend the time till dusk in some part of the building. If I went for an hour to the library I was sure to find her knitting her brows over some ponderous book, from which

she never glanced. Sometimes I happened on her in the Vernon Gallery, often studying Landseer's picture of 'War,' holding that heavy veil, which she always wore, stealthily above her eyes.

One Friday evening Mr. M— had kept us late at the lecture. I had left an umbrella at the entrance, and so went out through the museum, instead of by the male school, which was the shortest way from the lecture theatre. Coming quickly round the last corner, I saw on before me the slight grey figure, little black bonnet, and thick veil of Hilda Barry. She was standing alone, studying very attentively a certain specimen of 'Wych Elm' from Scotland, which stands about half-way down the last chamber. I halted as I approached her, for contrary to her usage she moved to meet me.

'I want to speak to you,' she said abruptly. 'The Irish are said to have kind hearts. I think you have, unless your face belies you.'

'It does not, at all events, in this instance. I will do anything in my power to oblige you.'

She kept silence a moment. Then said suddenly, 'Can you direct me to a respectable jeweller?'

'No indeed. I am a comparative stranger in London. I have never had any dealings with jewellers.'

She half turned silently away.

'But,' I added quickly, 'I can easily learn all about it. I promise to get you the information to-morrow.'

'That will be too late,' said she. 'Look! I want to sell this,' and she showed a brilliant ring lying in her purse. 'It must be to-night.'

'To-night? Oh, surely not to-night! Why, it will be dark in half an hour, you will barely have time to get home.'

'I am not going home. I have no home: I want to sell this in order to get a night's lodging. I would not have told it to any one in the world but yourself. All day I have been trying to make up my mind to say what I have said. Utter necessity at last chained me here till you should come up from the lecture. But if you cannot direct me I must go and seek my fortune.'

She said this last with a stern hopelessness of tone sometimes peculiar to her.

'You shall not get rid of me so easily,' I said. 'Come, let us get into the street, where we can talk unreservedly.' I hurried on and she followed. I gave my ticket and got my umbrella, and then we went down the tiled passage past the restaurant, smelling coffee all the way. As a matter of course my feet took the accustomed road to the bird-fancier's where I lodged.

'Where are we going?' said my companion, as we threaded Brompton Row, meeting omnibuses laden with city men coming home, and barristers from the Temple.

'To Chelsea, where I live. We cannot talk here for the noise. I am quite solitary in my lodging, and if you will come and take tea with me it will be a real charity.'

Hasty tears flashed into her eyes; she thrust her hand into my arm with an impulsive movement, and we made the rest of our way silently and quickly to our destination.

My heart misgave me as I knocked at the door. My landlady was rather uncertain in her preparations for me; indeed, to do her justice, I was irregular in my hours of return, so that it was not so much her fault. I had resolved to coax my poor little wanderer into confidence, and I felt hotly anxious that her first impressions of my surroundings should be snug and homelike, for these, I thought, would be likely to touch her lonely heart. And so my own bounded as I ran upstairs, and saw through my open door the ruddy firelight capering over the walls. When we entered, I could have hugged my quaint little old landlady, as she came up with the kettle, from her canaries. I suppose my lateness had given her plenty of time, but the fire blazed, the place was tidy, my small tea-tray set upon the dingy green tablecloth, the scanty red curtains were something drawn—in fact, the room was looking its best. I wheeled the old arm-chair to the fire, and enconced my visitor therein. 'Sit there, dearie,' said I.

She looked up half surprised,

half grateful at the word of endearment, but I took no notice. I had made up my mind. I took away her bonnet, unpinned her shawl, drew off her boots, and laid her feet upon the fender. She made no resistance. I felt that I was gaining my point—her trust in me was growing.

I unlocked my little tea-caddy and wet—oh! rare event!—three great spoonfuls of tea. I put the teapot by the fire, and toasted some bread. Butter was an unknown luxury in my quarters, but to-night we should have something better. I ran down and sent my landlady's little Johnny over to the Italian warehouse for a pot of damson jam. And then I stood a moment irresolute on the last step of the stairs, and thought that I might be wanting to leave that shilling with Mr. Cecil Wood, artist colourman, before the end of next week. But 'sufficient for the day is the evil thereof,' I whispered, and sprang upstairs to see that my toast was not burning.

I gave her a cup of tea, and some bread and jam, which she ate hungrily.

'I have eaten nothing since eight o'clock this morning,' said she.

I was glad to hear her say that. Not glad that she had fasted, but that she had acknowledged it. It sounded like the beginning of confidence.

'You will tell me all about it, will you not, dear?' I said, when our meal was over, and I had drawn my chair opposite to hers on the hearth-rug. It was quite dark now, and we had lit no candles, but the firelight was springing through the room.

'I will,' she said, with a frankness which I had scarcely hoped for. 'I will tell you everything, for you have come to me like a good angel. I am not afraid that you will betray me.'

'You need not,' I said; 'indeed I am your friend.'

'I must be strangely ungrateful to doubt it. My story is soon told.'

She thought a few minutes as if considering how she should begin. It is so hard to take up one's own

history, and tell of it condensedly like a tale. This is what she did tell at last.

'My father was German, and my name is not Barry, it is Werner. My parents died while I was very young, and until within the last two years my life was spent at school in England. I was heiress to a large fortune—better I had been poor, for I was spoiled and pampered because of my fine dresses and plentiful pocket-money. I grew up with a wilful temper, from which I suffer now. Two years ago, just when I was seventeen, my health became very delicate, and my guardian came and took me away from school. I had only seen him once before, and I did not like him. He told me that he had been my father's dearest friend, and that he expected I would be like a daughter to him. He was a very kindly-spoken old gentleman, but somehow I could not like nor trust him. We lived in a lonely old manor in the country, we three, my guardian, his maiden sister who kept house, and myself. I was very lonely, moped the days away by myself, and grew sicklier than ever. My only delights were reading and drawing. Drawing at school had been my favourite study. I loved it passionately. I had there, quickly gone through all the weak, good-for-nothing school studies, got prizes, and been lauded as a genius till I began to imagine myself a kind of female Raffaele. You may easily realize what an unhealthy life I led in the dull manor with no congenial companion to speak to. I could not endure Miss Selina, with her prying censorious ways, nor my guardian's oily tongue and furtive eyes. They seemed to have no relations but a certain "dear Alf" who was a captain, away with his regiment somewhere at the world's end, and was expected home yearly. He was my guardian's son.

'I moped and read till I grew as romantic and useless for any purpose of existence as could well be imagined. I knew nothing of real life; I lived among stars and moons and poets' dreams.

'Love was the one theme of all the books I read; and an imaginary

love became by degrees my household god. "Love" seemed to me a bright unique word of a heavenly tongue which had strayed into this world's commonplace language. I saw it at night from my window printed in stars over the sky; I spelt it in the moonbeams that stamped their silver characters on the floor of my quaint old-fashioned chamber. Do not think too hardly of my folly in this—remember I had no real natural affections around me: I was lonely, and fond of no one in the world, though my heart ached with a load of unspent love.

She paused a moment, turned her head slightly from me, and with a heated cheek went on, looking steadily into the fire the while—

"My health continued weakly: my guardian showed some anxiety. I said, "If you want to keep me alive, sir, let me have lessons in drawing!" I was full of artist's dreams. I think he was frightened, for he consented.

"A few days after Miss Selina made an announcement at dinner. She had ascertained that there was a very competent teacher of drawing in the neighbourhood, "a real artist," who was sojourning in the country, making studies from nature. He was giving lessons in the houses of several high families around, and was universally esteemed a perfect gentleman.

"Mr. Winthrop was engaged to give me lessons.

"Winthrop?" I echoed, starting.

"Yes, Mr. Frank Winthrop. Before I tell you the rest do look back upon what I have told you already, and think of my life. My new master came to me three evenings in the week.

"It was summer, early summer—May. My guardian was always out at dinner parties; or if not, nodding over his wine in the dining-room; and Miss Selina always dozed away the evenings. It had been so long a habit in the house not to mind my doings or my whereabouts that things went on now just the same as ever—only, instead of crying with loneliness in the wood, or reading Tennyson in the garden, or moping up in my own room, I was listening

to the glowing language that made me intimate with my master's picturesque thoughts; seeing my Lilliputian art-dwelling swept down by a strong hand, and the wondrous plan of a new heaven-touching palace sketched upon its ruins; receiving lessons which I can never forget; while the summer air brought us the jasmine on its breath, and the blackbirds in the garden sang treble to my master's deep musical tones.

"For many months things went on so—I breathed a new atmosphere, health returned to me. I am afraid that I did not learn a great deal, my master's plan of teaching was so new, I felt so ignorant, and had to begin again at the very commencement. But I had found a friend: my master was kind, gentle, firm; no one had ever treated me as he treated me. He only, of all the world, seemed to feel or care for me. Was it sinful, was it unwise, was it unmaidenly in me to give to this friend, who had bestowed on me new life and strength, all the pent-up affection which no other would have from me, and which was breaking my heart with its might? I have been told that it was all three, but I will not believe it. I cannot think that it was a crime so enormous that it must be expiated by a life of emptiness and sorrow. I did not give my heart unsought: I knew that I was his pet pupil, that my presence gave him pleasure, as his did to me.

"With his beautiful notions of art, faith, truth—with his soul of genius—his rich fancy and powerful hand—I felt that to be enshrined in his heart must be something like being enthroned among stars. "And this is life," I said—"how glorious life is!"

"In those days I had a certain beauty. You may wonder now, but I knew it when after my lesson I ran up-stairs to arrange my hair for tea, and stood before the glass in my white summer frock with eyes shining with happiness and a rose on each cheek. I had never before thought much about whether I had beauty or not: it is only for the sake of those who love us that we prize our good looks; and I had never had any such stimulus to vanity.

But now it was otherwise; and at some moments I have felt myself worthy to breathe in a world of love and beauty.

One evening I picked from the floor a little sketch-book, which I thought was my own. I put it in my pocket, and thought no more about it. That night, as I stood at the window in my dressing-gown, I opened the little book to put a rose leaf between its pages: a fine rose was dropping to pieces in a glass on the table. My eyes rested on a sheet which I had never seen before. A head was sketched upon it, exquisitely tinted, with a background of grave mellow drapery. It was a glorious little sketch—my heart swelled exultantly, for it was my own face that I saw on the paper. I laid the little book reverently on the silvered edge of the window, and bent over it in a trance of joy. Here on this tiny page were all my beautiful foreshadowings substantiated—all my heart's fair prophecies fulfilled: I now felt sure that my master held me dear. Half that night I knelt by the window, steeped to the lips in a sea of happiness, trying to pray, lest God should think me ungrateful, and take the sweet cup from my lips ere it was more than tasted.

'All this must sound very foolish and romantic to you. It is only while the sacredness of silence and secrecy hangs over things like this that they are real and true: directly they are thrust upon other ears they degenerate into folly and sentiment. I feel it so, but I must tell you that you may understand the rest. In the morning a difficult question occurred to me. How should the book be returned to my master, so that he should not suspect it had been opened? I thought over this long. Would it not seem strange if I employed any one else to give it him, having found it? and even if I did so, how should I see it given him without my face betraying my secret? I made up my mind that I must do it myself: I would hand it to him in a matter-of-fact manner, saying carelessly, "Here, sir, this was found upon the floor yesterday after you left." The very fact of my delivering

the book myself with so much coolness would be sure to prevent suspicion. I did it. I stood five minutes at the library door rallying my courage; it was of no use to tremble. I could not now call a servant to hand Mr. Winthrop his book; I could not wait till he inquired for it, that would be worst of all. At last I went in, and with as much quiet bravery as it was in me just then to summon, presented the sketch-book. Had he taken it as quietly all had been right; but the sudden flash of eyes and flush of forehead overset me. I could not raise my eyelids, and felt the hot blood glazing my eyes and burning my temples. I need not dwell any more on that evening: before an hour I had promised to be his wife.

'I could not understand why he was so reluctant to speak to my guardian. I would not believe, in my utter ignorance of the world, that any one could be so wickedly unjust as to imagine that Mr. Winthrop coveted my wealth. One morning I went for a ride after breakfast, thinking gladly as I cantered along that to-night I should have a drawing lesson. In my absence my master came to my guardian and told his honest story. In answer he was abused, scorned, and driven from the house with insults. On my return I was met with recoillings and taunts, and ordered to my room till I should be sorry for my sins. Then they came and sneered at me, and accused and raged at me—oh, such horrible things as they said! I did not endure them long: my first stupor of amaze over, I gave rein to my wild temper, and with a whirlwind of passion drove them all affrighted from the room. I locked myself in, and remained in my anguish all day and all night. My one only friend was gone: that was all I realized. He to whom I owed so much had been insulted and reviled in return. As the hours crept on storm after storm of agony broke over my head; and it was only when daylight came that I was worn out and calm.

'I wrote a little letter to Mr. Winthrop telling him I was true. I bribed a servant to send it to him;

but I am sure that she was bribed again, and that he never got it. He never came, never wrote, never appeared again in the neighbourhood. I suppose that he did not think me worth getting insulted for.

'I will pass quickly over the next nine months. I was hardly nineteen, and yet I felt aged, as if I had lived a long life, as if I had tasted all of joy and sorrow that life could offer me, and was ready for the grave.

'It was just nine months after this that my guardian's son, Captain Alfred, came home; and I soon saw that I was expected to marry him. I could not endure him: he was a drawling, conceited, middle-aged coxcomb, whom I despised and detested. It seemed to be all arranged between father and son. The captain assumed a manner towards me which I could not brook. He seemed at first to think it a "doosed bo" that he had to marry the little school-girl in order to get her money; but as there was no other means of laying hands on it, he was prepared to do so. This stage of affairs was revolting enough, but I tried to endure till a crisis should arrive when I could speak my mind. By-and-by, however, he began to pay me attention—to act the lover. He haunted my walks; he followed me about the house and garden; he would not take rebuffs; he laughed at my passions. I had no redress, so I took refuge in my own room. I spent day after day there: often I did not leave it for meals: I had little appetite. Since the captain's return Miss Selina had been continually purchasing me new dresses, and having them made up for me. These, through spite, I would not wear. I dressed myself always in an old black uniform frock belonging to my school-days. One month I spent almost entirely in my own room, till, through dreariness of mind and confinement, my cheeks grew hectic, and my hands trembled. I was nervous, and fancied my room haunted. I could not sleep at night.

'All at once a feverish reaction came. I longed for society of whatever kind; I dreaded being alone; I wanted excitement.

'In those days we were a good deal asked out in the neighbourhood. The invitations were regularly sent to me, but I invariably declined them. At last, one day there came cards for a dinner-party, and suddenly I desired to go. I had overheard some one saying that the captain was going elsewhere, and I saw him ride away after breakfast. I resolved to take advantage of his absence, and taste the novelty and excitement I craved. At evening I took (I remember it all so distinctly) a violet silk frock from my wardrobe, and curled my hair over my shoulders. I saw my face looking wildly feverish in the glass, before I descended to the drawing-room. I entered, with my cloak hanging over my arm, prepared to acquaint my guardian with my intention to be of the party. The room was half dark, and I thought empty; but midway on the floor I recoiled in dismay, for Captain Alfred sprang to meet me. He attempted to take my hand, and paid me some hateful compliments. I know not what I said; I believe I screamed out. I was feverish; all my senses quivered with nervous excitement. My guardian and his sister came running in, and a scene followed, too miserable to be detailed. My guardian, in a fury, bade me give up my tempers, and henceforward look on the captain as my husband.

'I vowed I would not. I seemed to breathe fire; green and red lightning went flying over the walls, flashed in people's faces, and blinded my eyes.

"You talk of fortune-hunters," I cried, "what is he?" pointing at the captain. My guardian became more and more enraged at this, swore terrible oaths that by my father's will I must marry his son, or be a beggar. I said no more, but fled from the room. They thought me cowed, and went to their party.

'I rushed up stairs, and flung myself on my knees, praying wildly to God to open some door of escape from my miserable life. My prayer calmed me somewhat. I rose from my knees, and stared blankly into

my future, which seemed as dark and vague as the night around me; feeling that I must do something next, and wondering what that something should be. My room was beautiful at that moment with moonlight; but I saw no beauty in it, only a sickly melancholy light lying among the shadows, like a deathly smile in dead eyes. I stood at the window, and a finger seemed to beckon me, and a whisper to breathe in my ear. A thought glimmered across my brain. I snatched at it, feeling a rush of life coming back to my chilled face. I rang the bell quickly. In lamp-light and firelight I could harbour my new idea, and treat it as a substantial guest, but not among these unearthly moonbeams and depressing shadows. My maid brought up my tea-tray and lamp. Janet was the daughter of a neighbouring farmer. I had engaged her when I first came from school. I had grown fond of her, and made her many presents. I believe she loved me in return, and showed her kindness in many little ways; but she was gay and giddy, and, I fear, not proof against a large bribe. I had learned of late to distrust her.

'When she had left me, I sat for ten minutes at the table, with my head between my hands. At the end of that time I had made up my mind. I then stirred myself, poured out my tea, and made a better meal than I had eaten for long. When the girl came for my tray, I said, "Janet, I shall want nothing more to-night; you need not come again." I would fain have asked her assistance, but I feared to do so.

'I waited only a few moments after her steps had been lost in the distance, and then I took my lamp in hand, and made my way up stairs to a passage little used, but which communicated with several old rooms, now quite musty and deserted. Their furniture was old-fashioned in the extreme; and the tall, narrow wardrobes and carved high-backed chairs had a ghostly look to me. I had only been in them once or twice before. I remembered, however, that there were certain quaint old dresses locked

away in some of the wardrobes, which had probably belonged to some of my great-grandmothers or great-grandaunts. Miss Selina kept the keys. Remembering this, I went back, and searched her drawers, possessed myself of a bunch, and sought the ghostly rooms once more. All the queer old keys were tried again and again before I succeeded in opening a door. At last I grew nearly desperate, and listened in dread for steps on the stairs. Hearing none, I made a last effort, gained my point, and opened the largest wardrobe. I rummaged nervously, and with a sinking heart, among dim brocades and faded satins. None of these would suit my purpose. On a high shelf I found a pot of rouge, and a wig of grey plaits. I set these aside; they might be of service; and then, with a desperate energy, I returned to the attack on a neighbouring lock. It yielded, and there, within this second press, I found what seemed to be the earthly apparel of some departed widowed ancestor. Sombre garments hung from the pegs, and folds of crape, and muslin, and bombazine lay on the shelves.

'I chose a black gown of stiff flowered silk, and a white kerchief to cover the quaint, ill-fitting body; a wide old-fashioned cloak, and a cap and bonnet, which, though queer, and rather antique looking, I thought might pass well enough on an old-world dame of the present day. I took a little rouge from the pot, and left it back on the shelf; gathered the articles I had chosen in a bundle, locked the wardrobe, replaced the keys in Miss Selina's drawer, and hastened back to my room with my treasures. Having locked the door, it did not take very long to metamorphose me into an antiquated gentlewoman, with grey braided hair, widow's cap, and rich old-fashioned cloak and gown. I cut my long hair quite short, so that the wig might cover it. I rubbed a faint smearing of rouge over my whole face, which quite altered my complexion, and powdered my eyebrows to match my hair.

'Latterly I had spent nothing of

my allowance of pocket-money. I had thirty pounds in my desk. This I put in my purse, and also concealed some jewels about my person. I took with me the silk dress which I had worn that evening, and a pocket-handkerchief, marked with my name. In fear and trembling I unlocked my door, listened a while on the passage, and then passed swiftly down the staircase, and out of the hall door. I had been to London once, and I knew where to find the station-house, and at what hour a train passed. On my way I flung my dress into the river that skirted the lawn, and wet my handkerchief, and tangled it in the brambles on the hedge. "Let them think what they please," said I, as I hastened on, "only God forbid that they should track me out."

"I had no difficulty in getting my ticket, and soon found myself whirling away on the night-train to London. I often have wondered since at my sensations during that journey. I felt no fear, no misgiving. I only felt that I was free. The moonlight flashed in at us as we sped along, and I now thought it radiant and cheering. But the carriage-lamp soon quenched it. My fellow-travellers were an elderly lady and gentleman. The latter dozed in the corner, while the former worked busily at crochet. She seemed inclined to converse, and I feared to answer her. I had been counted a good mimic at school, and now I imitated Miss Selina's sharp voice. Then, lest she should oblige me to keep up a conversation, I pretended to sleep also, and so the journey passed.

"Even when standing on the platform, alone and unfriended in London, I felt no fear of anything. I asked a porter, in my assumed voice, to direct me to some quiet place at hand for the night. He did so, and I knew by the manner of the chambermaid who attended me that my disguise was complete. Next day I took a cab, and told the man to drive me out to Kensington, and to stop at the first lodging-house he happened on in that neighbourhood. I inquired at several, and at last

engaged a room in a respectable-looking house in — Street. My landlady was very civil, and at once I found myself settled down in London.

"But, having thus successfully made use of my disguise, how was I to get rid of it? I could not attend classes at the Kensington Museum in my character of antiquated gentlewoman, and to attend those classes I had resolved. I fancied, in my utter ignorance of money matters, that my store would last me a long time, and that, by selling an ornament now and again, I could, with economy, manage to live, till I should be able to earn something in some way as an artist. What a fool I was! I expected to be able to draw at once everything which I attempted. I had a vague idea that I should get into an atmosphere of art at the Museum, and be directed in the right way to earning.

"I had now to exert my ingenuity again. I purchased some grey camelite stuff, brought it home, and made it up in secret, to fit myself. I then informed my landlady that my niece was coming up from the country to attend classes at the Kensington Museum, and that, having found her room comfortable, I would send the young lady to board with her. I also went to Mr. B——'s office, and procured a class ticket of admittance to the Museum for a young lady called Hilda Barry. I bade my landlady adieu one morning, desiring her to expect my niece at a certain hour in the evening, and then walked a long way into the City, past Temple Bar two miles, I am sure. When I thought I had walked far enough, I went into a shop, bought a bonnet (the same which I wear), and this shawl. I had brought the dress with me. I then called a cab, and got in with my parcels, and desired the man to drive me to No. 7, — Street.

"As soon as we had started I drew down the blinds, pulled off bonnet, wig, cap, gown, rolled them up in a bundle, dressed myself quickly in the clothes I now wear, rubbed the rouge from my face with my handkerchief, smoothed my hair with a

side-comb, and tied on my bonnet and veil. When we arrived at the house, and the cabman opened the door for me, I could scarcely keep from laughing at his face of consternation. He stammered out something about the "old lady." I told him that the old lady had engaged the cab for me. He still stared, but as he found his money all right, he at length mounted his box, and drove off.

'It was rather amusing to see how completely my landlady had been deceived. She spoke to me often about my aunt, said she was a fine, active old lady, and that I resembled her something.

'I presented myself at once at the Museum. I had not been there for many days before my hopes of earning were dashed to the ground. I found myself on the very lowest step of the ladder, while even those who seemed to me at the highest, appeared to count themselves only beginners. It was of little use that I could design illustrations for the "Idylls of the King," and make them look well to uncritical eyes, when I could not attempt the "Antinous," for drawings of which others were taking medals. I saw the students smile at my miserable attempts. I knew, I saw, I heard all around me the assurance that years must pass ere I could earn. And where should I be in a short time? How short I dared not think. An indescribable agony of terror overwhelmed me at times. I feared to meet my landlady. The money went fearfully fast. I worked night and day. I dreaded to be anywhere but in the Museum. Mr. B— noticed that I worked unceasingly. He spoke kindly to me, and warned me against injuring my health. One night he found me working in the Antique Room alone, and talked to me in a gentle, friendly way. When he had gone, I laid down my head, and cried in desolation. I almost wished that I could injure my health, and die while yet my landlady looked on me humanely, and would give me shelter. Better far, than to wander an outcast in the merciless city, and in the end die of starvation.

'Only at night, when I went home, did I feel secure for a few hours at least. In the mornings I hated the light, not knowing what the day might bring. At last my very energy gave way. I could not work for the haunting terror of what might lie before me,—what sufferings, what temptations, what outcast wanderings! It was to scare these phantoms that I laughed and romped with that lighthearted girl, who thought me as glad and gay as herself. You, only you, seemed to penetrate and sympathize with me. I feared you for it. I yearned for sympathy, but I dreaded to attract attention. Much as I shrank from the future before me, it seemed endurable, compared with that which must await me, did my guardian discover me.

'I sold my jewels one by one. But even my ignorance was convinced at last that I had received nothing like a fair price for them. I began to distrust my landlady, and she to distrust me. I thought she charged me extortionately on every small pretence, and I am sure that she began to suspect my difficulties. I received no letters, I had no visitors, I was scantily supplied with every necessary. She had opportunity of letting her room to better advantage, and threatened to turn me out, if I did not pay at once certain bills to which I objected. She told me this morning, that if I did not settle the account to-night on my return, I should not sleep under her roof. She is a cold-hearted woman, and I did not know how to cringe or beg. In my despair I applied to you to-night. You have been a true, true friend. I know you will not betray me. If I have acted unwisely I have been bitterly punished for it. God help me! The future is all a blank.'

She ceased speaking, and I saw the tears shining in the firelight, as they fell like rain into her lap. I knelt beside her, and drew her head down on my shoulder.

'Have no fear,' I whispered. 'The worst is past. God has brought you so far, and will not desert you. Stay here with me. I am poor, poor enough, God knows, but we will

work together and plan—and I have no doubt earn too, before long. At all events, we will rise or fall together.'

She threw her arms round my neck, and cried passionately, and kissed my hands.

I sat up on my pillow that night, and watched by the starlight Hilda's pale beautiful face, slumbering like a baby's beside me. I thought over her strange story, and strengthened my resolve to assist her. And then there arose a fear in my heart, and I thought of my widowed mother at home, with her slender income, and little Elsie with her longing to go to school. But I shook the fear from me, and turned to sleep again, murmuring, 'The Lord will provide.'

'Hilda,' said I one morning, 'have you any objection to sit for me?'

She smiled and asked why.

'Because I want to venture a little picture for this year's Academy Exhibition. I cannot afford a real model; you would just do.'

She laughed, and agreed.

She had improved wonderfully since that crisis of her distress. We had sold her ring, and settled accounts with the hard landlady, and we lived and worked together. Hilda progressed now at her school studies. She designed rapidly, and by my advice spent part of her time in learning to draw on wood. She also improved at painting, and her work in the life class provoked no more smiles.

She never alluded to Mr. Winthrop; but I knew she was quite ignorant of the fact that her former master was one of the most rising artists of the day. She never looked in newspapers or Art catalogues, or she might have seen his name figuring conspicuously in both. I at first wanted her to let me write to a lawyer and state her case, as I felt sure that her right to her father's property could not depend on her marriage with her guardian's son. But Hilda showed so much distress at the idea of discovery, and persisted so steadfastly in her belief that it would only bring a renewal of her old persecution, that I let the subject drop.

One night, while I lay awake, a

bright idea occurred to me, and I devised a little scheme. The first step towards its development was that question to Hilda—'Have you any objection to sit for me?'

I procured a bit of drapery even better suited to my purpose than that which I had found in the school. I longed to ask Hilda the colour of those grave, mellow folds, which she had described in Mr. Winthrop's sketch. But I dared not excite her suspicion of my purpose. I studied the hues and shades, and at last satisfied myself that I had hit upon the right tint and tone.

In the early spring days we went to work. Hilda made an excellent sitter. She fell into a dream as soon as my brush began to move, and unconsciously gave me the very rapt, half-melancholy expression I wanted to convey. I gave her a sparing reflection from that 'rose on each cheek' which she had told of so naively. I gave her brow its transparent pallor, her eyes their dusky shine, and her lips their full meed of rich brilliant dye. I succeeded beyond my hopes of making the picture 'a thing of beauty.' It grew under my hands; I wrought my purpose into it; and every day I said, 'It is good.' Olive and crimson, amber and dusk, wove themselves into harmony like the strains in a choral burst of music. And the likeness was there, appealingly good. Hilda started in fear, when after the last touch she saw her double. 'If her guardian should see it? Or if——' she flushed and turned away. I knew what her thought was; she was too unselfish to finish her objection. She would not damp my hope. It was 'beautiful, too beautiful,' she said.

May came. The picture was sent, and, blessed chance! accepted. We went one day, and saw it in the Exhibition. Hilda wandered nervously among the pictures, hardly daring to raise her veil. Another day I made an errand into town alone, leaving her at her work, and sought the Academy again. I sat down in front of my picture, and for some hours watched all who passed, and all who gazed, hearing their remarks.

I had been there long, when a young man came and took his stand

between me and my work. Many men, young and old, had done the same, but I noticed this person especially, as he seemed to bestow all his attention on my small picture, unheeding its more prominent and attractive neighbours. I rose, and walked past and near him. Yes, he certainly was studying my picture. I returned to my seat. It was early, and the rooms were not very full. Our end was almost deserted. I saw him take something from his pocket and study it in his hand, then again gaze on the picture. After a long time he turned and walked away with a disturbed countenance. As I followed the pale stern face, a sudden gleam of recognition flickered through my brain. I struggled to recollect where I could have seen him before. And then association went to work, and gradually a mist of smoke seemed to rise, pierced by a single spark of fire, and encircled the head. Then memory presented me with a familiar sketch—Hilda standing still in the Vernon Gallery, looking stealthily from under her veil at that picture of 'War' by Landseer.

Now it was all clear. The face before me was strikingly like the handsomer of the two heroes in that picture. 'This must be Mr. Winthrop,' I said, and my heart rose to my mouth. Where had he gone? Ah! there he was again, speaking to the person who sells the pictures. He took a catalogue from the table, and looked hurriedly through it, passed his finger down a page, shut again and replaced it, hastened out of the room and down the steps.

I gathered my shawl around me, and was about to follow his example, when I saw some one approach and place the ticket 'Sold' on my picture. Positively on mine. I could scarcely believe my eyes. Twenty guineas wherewith to replenish our scanty purse! I stood in the fast-crowding gallery, seeing no one, blinded with sunshine. I hurried to the green-baize table, and inquired who was the purchaser of the picture just then ticketed. 'A gentleman who had just left—Mr. Winthrop, the artist.'

I had heard enough, and sped

home with a light heart. I flashed in at Hilda, where she sat poring over her work in the little Chelsea sitting-room, looking dull and weary in the midst of a streak of May sunset glass.

'Oh! Mave,' she cried, dropping her block in bewilderment, as I flung off my bonnet and danced about the room with delight, 'is it sold? Oh, dear, is it sold?'

'Sold! sold!' I echoed, stopping my pirouettes, putting my hands upon her shoulders, and looking in her eyes. 'Really and positively sold—disposed of for evermore!'

And then we had a great hug, and the tears came trickling over my face, whether I would or not. It was very ridiculous, because I was laughing all the time. No wonder Hilda stared at me. She thought it was all about the success and the money.

'Now, my dearie,' said I, after we had subsided a little into our usual strain of conversation, 'I have reason to expect that the person who bought the picture may call here soon, perhaps this evening, so we must have the room very tidy, also our hair.'

'Who is he?' asked she with interest.

'Oh, a gentleman. How should I know his name? But he will call, and then I suppose we shall hear.'

'Perhaps he is going to order another picture,' suggested my innocent Hilda; and that was the last we said about him.

I spent a good hour, arranging our room to the perfection of neatness. In the fulness of my heart I had bought a large bunch of violets from a sad little Irish girl who haunts the Strand. I placed them in a pretty glass on the window table where Hilda sat at work. She laughed at my extreme particularity about her appearance. I arranged her curls myself in their most picturesque style, and insisted that she must put on a fresh linen collar of tiny dimensions, although she urged that the one she wore was not the least bit soiled, and hinted broadly at our washerwoman's bill.

'You are growing quite magnificent on the strength of your twenty guineas,' she said. And then, hav-

ing submitted, she went on with her work. I watched her a few minutes with satisfaction, and was hard-hearted enough to feel content that the pale, tired face looked touching, under the shadow of the cloudy hair.

I then retired to our inner closet, and left Hilda to her fate.

The clock struck seven, and quick upon its jingling tones came a rat-rat-tat-tat to the door. Hilda cried out to me, 'Mave! Mave! here is your visitor.'

'Stay, like a good girl,' I answered; 'I shall be ready in an instant.'

Scarcely had I spoken when a step was on the landing and a hand on the door.

I had provided myself with a chink through which to ascertain if the new comer was indeed the person whom I expected. I saw Hilda rise with her usual air of reserve and dignity towards a stranger. She turned her face to me and to the door. I saw the crimson blood flash over her face, and in a breath she was wan as the moon. She opened her lips to speak, her dilated eyes deadened and closed, and at once she fell heavily upon her face on the floor.

I was terrified; I had not counted upon this. Hilda was usually so strong to bear and so self-governed. But I should have remembered that she was not robust, and tired after the day's close work. I had been wrong not to prepare her.

I hardly remember what Mr. Winthrop did or said. I only know that his face was very white, and his lips quivered as he asked me for some water, in God's name. We were not kept long in uneasiness. Hilda recovered quickly. I shall never forget her smile—so pallid, yet so radiant that it seemed unearthly, when she saw her old master's face bending over her with anxious tenderness.

Hilda is now Mr. Winthrop's happy little wife. They have got a pretty house in Brompton, and my blessed picture hangs in the drawing-room.

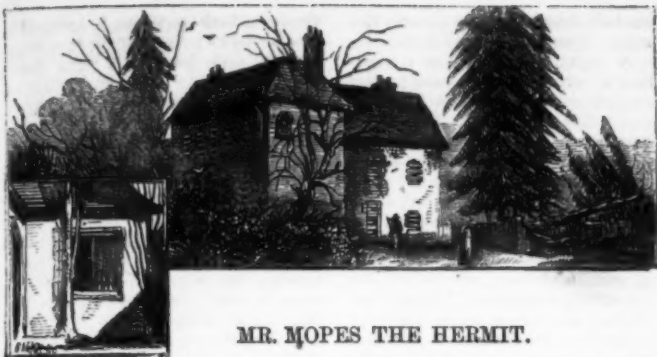
They are both very much annoyed at my fidelity to my old birdfancier, while a little jewel of a room lies vacant for me at Honeysuckle Terrace. But I stay on in my old lodging. It suits me better, my plain dress, and my bonnet seldom renewed; also my necessity for hard work, and the hoarding of time. But I do love to go to see them. Hilda's house is the neatest, her drawing-room the daintiest, her kitchen the best ordered, and her bedroom the most refreshingly tidy of any as yet known to me, although their young mistress does stain her fingers with paint in her husband's studio for several hours during the day. I don't know how it is. I used to say to her, 'Hilda, you are bound to be a slatternly wife, being an artist;' and she has answered, laughingly, 'Oh, certainly: you shall see what a sloven I am going to prove myself.'

Perhaps it is that Hilda works at her easel during those hours which most ladies spend in their dressing-rooms, paying visits, shopping, or reading novels. I don't know. But she is no sloven, when I, having come for tea, met her in the hall of a winter evening, in her warm-coloured dress, her trim cuffs and collar, her little silk apron, and, though last not least, the sunshiniest of welcoming smiles. Mr. Winthrop is as kind to me as if he were my brother, and it is chiefly owing to him that I am beginning to succeed as an artist.

I have reason to believe that the cruelty of Hilda's guardian will speedily be exposed, and her property placed in her husband's hands. This will make them very rich indeed, but it cannot make them happier than they are.

They have promised to come with me on a visit to my West Irish mountain home next summer. When the lilies are full blown on the blue lake under our cottage gable, I shall have looked in my mother's face, and held little Elsie in my arms.

R. M.



MR. MOPES THE HERMIT.

READERS of 'Tom Tiddler's Ground'—the last Christmas number of 'All the Year Round'—will not have forgotten the very curious introductory chapter, headed 'Picking up Soot and Cinders.' It formed the centre, they will remember, from which the various stories radiated. Mr. Traveller is spending a midsummer day 'down among the pleasant dales and trout streams of a green English county.' After a gossip with the landlord of the little village ale-house at which he has halted, he sets forth on a journey of five miles in quest of a man who is the marvel of the whole country round. This man is a hermit who lives amid soot and cinders, in a house he has allowed to fall into utter ruin and decay, and whose sole clothing is an old blanket fastened with a skewer. In due time Mr. Traveller reaches the dilapidated abode, speaks with its strange occupant, rates him soundly for the slothful and uncleanly life he leads, and undertakes to prove to him, 'through the lips of every chance wayfarer' who comes in at his gate, that in outlawing himself from society, in quitting the habits of civilized life, and in disregarding the laws of common decency, he is a poor weak creature, whose only merit is that of foolishly setting himself up in opposition to the designs of Eternal Providence.

Various visitors arrive who relate their experiences of life. These are all more or less condemnatory of the course adopted by the recluse. Fi-

nally, Mr. Traveller, strong in the consciousness that he has utterly routed Mr. Mopes—as he fantastically names his hermit—departs in company with a moralizing tinker, whom he invites to supper. To this act of graceful hospitality he is determined by the exact correspondence of the tinker's opinion with his own relative to the squalid and unproductive life led by the gentleman in the blanket.

All who have read 'Tom Tiddler's Ground' are, of course, familiar with these incidents; but very few are aware that they repose upon a basis of actual fact. Probably, indeed, not one in a hundred would imagine this to be the case; for the introductory chapter, which may be looked upon to some extent as a personal narrative, has all the appearance of being a cleverly arranged prelude to the stories which follow.

How is it possible to believe that such a social anomaly as Mr. Mopes is to be met with in England at the present day? Simeon Stylites was possible in his time; so, no doubt, were the grazing monks of Mesopotamia, whom St. Ephrem panegyrized. We can believe in Apemantus, and understand Timon. But our present problem is more difficult. We are required to realize as a contemporary a man whose skin is encrusted with dirt and smoke, and protected by a skewer-fastened blanket; whose bed is a heap of soot and cinders; whose sole society is the inquisitive stranger who comes to gape at his noxious cell, or the low tramp at-

tracted thither by the hopes of a stray copper and a glass of gin.

And yet, Mr. Mopes is no illusion or creation of the fancy. He really lives, moves, and has his being, much in the manner described by the traveller. The green English county in which he dwells is the county of Hertford. His abode pretty closely resembles the rotting, tumbledown dwelling-place so picturesquely described by the writer in 'Tom Tiddler's Ground;' and the occupant is quite as loosely, not to say indecorously, attired. Finally, Mr. Mopes's real name is L****, and the spot where he resides is about a couple of miles from S*****, a station on the Great Northern Railway. If, being in the neighbourhood, you wish to find that spot, you have only to ask the first person you meet and you are sure to be directed to it; for 'Old L****,' as people familiarly call him, is thoroughly well known to every man, woman, and child in the district. And this will surprise no one when it is stated that for twelve long years he has led his present extraordinary life.

In the house he occupies, his father and his grandfather—persons of fair fortune and good position—resided before him; and although somewhat repelling in aspect now, it has evidently been in its day a cheery and commodious dwelling-place.

Even now, indeed, after twelve years of neglect, it is anything but a total ruin. Part of the edifice is of solid-looking red brick, which is in an excellent state of preservation. Another part, which has evidently been added to the other, is of plaster, and this, too, presents a tolerably fair appearance to the eye. The roof, where it can be seen, looks as though it were still water-tight, except perhaps in one or two spots. The place, nevertheless, has a decidedly deserted look about it, and might fairly be taken for a tenement in Chancery, or the country-house of a miser.

The front door, for instance, is partly boarded up, and thus protected from the influences of the weather and the depredations of thieves. The windows are barri-

caded with stout pieces or logs of rough timber, firmly bound with iron bands, and fastened to the framework by strong rivets; so that the spectator might at first suppose the building had either stood a vigorous siege, or was prepared for one. A fruit tree grows against the side of the house which faces the road; and attached to the wall behind its branches is a pigeon-house; but there are no pigeons in it now.

The outhouses, of which there are several, are far more dilapidated than the main building, though, as they are all tiled, there is, of course, no appearance of the thatch having 'lightly fluttered away on all the winds of all the seasons of the year.' The tiles, however, have in some places slipped away, leaving apertures, through which wind and rain have free entrance. In one case the front wall has entirely fallen out, and a neighbouring fir-tree has fallen with it for company—as if Nature herself languished forth a protest against man's neglect. If the rick-yard is not literally 'hip high in vegetable rankness,' it is certainly overgrown with sprawling vegetation and littered with fragments of ruin. The ricks themselves in an adjoining field are little better than so many dung-heaps, preserving scarcely any trace of their original shape or colour. As Mr. Traveller says, they look for all the world like 'mounds of rotten honeycomb or dirty sponge.'

The house stands a few feet back from the road, what was once, doubtless, a neatly-trimmed lawn intervening. This is now merely a huge patch of ragged grass. In other days, posts and chains protected it from the tread of passing trespassers; now, the chains are 'conspicuous only by their absence,' and a solitary post is left rotting alone. By the side of the dwelling there is a pathway, formerly entered by a gate; but as this gate has long ago gone off guard, the passage is open to any one who feels inclined to enter. The pathway leads to the kitchen and wash-house: in the former of these domestic offices the hermit has taken up his abode. The latter is an outhouse at right angles

to the main edifice, and at the bottom of the pathway. The kitchen is in the building itself, on the left as you enter.

There is a window in the outhouse looking upon the pathway, or rather a casement in two divisions, fastening in the middle, and opening outwards. One division has disappeared; the other is thrown wide open, and has evidently been many years in that position, for immediately in front of it an elder bush has grown, season by season, from the ground beneath, until it is not only higher than the window, but even higher than the outhouse itself. To shut the casement, therefore, would now be impossible, owing to the vegetable impediment which has arisen since it was opened. There is perhaps no feature of the scene more impressive or more suggestive than this. It is at once an exemplification of the activity of nature, and a rebuke to human indolence.

The kitchen has no casements: they have fallen away, or, it may be, have been removed; but the stout iron bars, with which the windows of country houses are often protected, still remain. Behind these bars the hermit holds converse with those who choose to come to see him.

A strange, gloomy place is the cell which this modern anachoret has chosen for his place of abode. As you gaze into it, even if your eyes have not previously been dazzled by lustrous sunshine, or by the summer brightness of trees and fields and flowers—it was a damp and misty day in spring when we visited the place—you have considerable difficulty at first in discerning what is within. You see after a while, however, that it is a small, low-roofed room, with a floor of unequal level, owing probably to the accumulations of dirt; and that its walls are blackened by the smoke of a small coal fire, which for years has filled the place with sooty gloom. There are three common wooden chairs, one tolerably well fitted for service, the others crazy and dilapidated. There is also an ordinary kitchen table, entirely covered with old and dirty wine-bottles. Other wine-bottles, some whole, some broken, are pro-

fusely scattered about the floor, with here and there a spirit jar by their side. There is really nothing else in the place.

Nothing? Stay, what is this dark object which is brought out into dull relief by the feeble light of the fire? It is a form as of some one crouching over the flame, and rubbing his skinny, outstretched arms in evident enjoyment of warmth too scant to be kindly, and too uncertain to be genial. You might think him some dusky savage, only half weaned as yet from the wild habits of his native woods; or, perchance, some poor outcast of reason, trembling and shivering lest the indulgence he has obtained by stealth should be harshly terminated by intrusion. He is none of these, however; neither untamed Indian, nor 'poor Tom'; he is the *genius loci*—the hermit himself.

He rises, as he sees we have come to speak with him; drawing himself up hastily, and falling back a step or two from the fireplace, so that the outline of his form can no longer be discerned against the uncertain background of smoky gloom. His eyes, however, shine out brightly, and the eyeballs look strangely white in the midst of the ever-deepening obscurity of the narrow room. But for this we should not know that we were in the presence of a fellow-man, or in the neighbourhood of any living thing.

It is by this time necessary for us to break silence, which we do by politely expressing a hope that he is in the enjoyment of a satisfactory sanitary condition. He abruptly answers that he is very well; trusts we are the same; and then begins a running fire of questions to which we are fain to reply.

'Who are you?' he asks, looking at us through what appears to be an engraver's working microscope, though it may be, for aught we can tell, the glass stopper of a pickle bottle.

We tell him our name and that of our companion.

'Where do you come from?' he asks, very rapidly, and without advancing a step out of the gloom in which his form is lost.

We state that we come from London.

'Do you live there?'

A reply in the affirmative conveys to him the information he requires on this point.

'What do you do?'

One of us following literature, and the other, art, we make the hermit acquainted with these facts.

'And what do you want?' inquires the hermit, evidently very well satisfied with the answers he has hitherto received.

'This gentleman,' I reply, 'wishes to make a sketch of your house; and I should like to have a chat with you, if you have no objection.'

Manifestly the hermit has no objection, for he says (with a sort of pleasant indifference, like a man who is gratified by granting a favour, but who wishes it to be thought that he cares nothing either way about the matter),

'Oh, he may sketch it if he likes; it has often been sketched before.'

Then, without seeking for further information respecting us, he makes a comment upon the occupation of one of his visitors, which serves as a means of introducing the conversation that ensues.

But the hermit is not always so soon satisfied. From some visitors he exacts the most minute particulars. He will ask, for instance, where they were born, where their father was born, where their mother was born. Then he will wish to know whether father and mother are still living; and, if dead, where buried, and when. These points settled, he will perhaps ask his visitors whether they are married or single. If the former, the maiden name of wife. 'And where was she born, eh?' 'Her father and mother living?' 'No! Ah! Been married long?' 'Not very long.' 'Any children?' 'One.' 'One! ah! boy or girl?' 'Boy.'

Until the hermit's thirst for information is slaked by these replies, conversation on general subjects is impossible.

Our conversation has, however, begun at once in right good earnest, and it soon rises to the dignity of a set discussion upon the influence of the cheap press. The name of a popular and widely circulated newspaper has been mentioned, and while

the hermit shows that, although living out of the world, he is quite familiar with that journal, he makes no scruple of affecting to regard it with superb derision and contempt. Indeed, he expresses his opinion that all newspapers are injurious, rather than otherwise to the mass of the people, whom they mislead rather than guide. Their invariable result, it would seem, is to excite evil passions, to set class against class, to create discontent in the hearts of the poor, and to disturb the minds of the uneducated. Their proprietors are mercenary; their writers are without principle; they give expression to sentiments they condemn; they declaim against opinions they applaud.

Then the hermit maintains that the great mass of the population, thanks to unjust laws and bad government, are far worse off than they were a couple of centuries ago; that there has been no real progress, except perhaps in medicine, during the last two hundred years; that railways are a delusion; popular enlightenment the merest humbug—he has by this time become emphatic—and sanitary reform a sham. Plagues and the sweating sickness no longer prevail, he admits, but their place has been taken by new and equally fatal diseases, in spite of Commissioners and Boards of Health. Then, too, he maintains, snapping his fingers at statistics, as distorted and unreliable, that the average rate of mortality is higher than it was even a hundred years ago; and that, whereas you cannot look at an old obituary, without finding numerous instances of remarkable longevity recorded, now you find that people hastily drop off, and rot away, long before they have attained to the allotted term of human life.

All this time, it should be remarked, the hermit is, apparently, so nervously apprehensive lest the sentiments he utters should be beyond the comprehension of his visitors, that he constantly stops himself, and inquires, parenthetically, 'Do you understand?' abbreviating the question after a while into 'Do you un—?' and affording thus a hope which is never destined to be realized, that

he will altogether cease soon to put this very superfluous inquiry. For, as may be imagined, his views are so free from transcendental obscurity or æsthetical indistinctness, that the chance of misunderstanding them is wonderfully slight. It is all Lombard Street, indeed, to a China orange, that you will fully apprehend his meaning.

And now it becomes evident that the hermit is getting accustomed to us; that he is losing something of the hesitating nervousness which has at times been visible in his manner; and that he is not displeased with our company. In fact, he has gone so far into the vocabulary of compliment as to say that, although he is bored by some visitors, he is always pleased with the conversation of an intellectual man. As a proof, perhaps, that he means this laudation to strike home, he comes forth from the obscurity in which he has been standing all this time, seats himself upon the window sill, steadies himself by firmly clutching the iron bars, and is at last fairly face to face with us.

It is impossible honestly to assert, when he is thus brought under our very eyes, that the hermit improves upon close acquaintance. While but dimly visible in the background of his cell there is a halo of mystery around him, and his very indistinctness invests him with attributes in harmony with the wild and fantastic life to which he has devoted himself. Imagination overmasters judgment, and you hesitate to believe you are speaking with an ordinary man like yourself. When he comes forth he will present, you fancy, the aspect of a stern and ascetic recluse. His countenance will be grave and severe, there will be no smile upon his lips, no indulgence in his eye. He will walk with slow and measured steps; his gestures will be commanding; and the simple garb in which he is arrayed, will give to his form a dignity that is rarely associated with more ordinary attire.

He comes forth; you see him as he really is; and the sight, it must be confessed, is so far from being a wholesome one, that you are

something more than disappointed. For—there is no disguising the fact—the man is dirty, not partially or temporarily dirty, but dirty comprehensively and permanently. The bed of soot and cinders sloping downwards from his fireplace which he used to lie upon has disappeared; so it is to be presumed, that for the sake of softness, he lies now upon a bed of soot alone. His hair is dirty, his scalp is dirty, his face is dirty, his hands and arms are dirty, his body and his legs are dirty, his feet are dirty; in a word, he is dirty all over. And the difficulty of ascertaining this fact is by no means great. For if in other days the hermit was so far extravagant in dress as to indulge himself in a blanket and skewer, he now—from economical motives perhaps—dispenses with the skewer, and retains the blanket alone.

Now a blanket is serviceable enough in its way, and may be employed for a variety of purposes; but when it comes to be used as the substitute for an entire suit of clothes, its shortcomings are at once made evident. The hermit seems to be aware of this, for he continually adjusts and readjusts his one garment, that it may the more effectually perform its office and fulfil the requirements of a too fastidious civilization. But the blanket is but a blanket after all, and cannot by any amount of folding and refolding be made to do duty as coat, waistcoat, and trousers at one and the same time.

Thus, as before remarked, the hermit is not a wholesome sight to look upon. You cannot help feeling that his great primary want is a warm bath, or perhaps a series of warm baths, for a single one would evidently be insufficient to wash this artificial blackamoor white. Not that his skin is absolutely black. It is at present a sort of half-tone—a kind of compromise between soot and smoke—the soot evidently having the best chance of ultimately gaining the upper hand. In the twilight you might perchance mistake him for a Mohican; in the daylight you would say he was a sweep.

If the warm bath is needed, so also is the stealthy comb that precedes the agile shears. For the hermit's hair is open to the objection of being about as long and as lean as that of a mad artist; and is, moreover, so glued together in places by dirt, that it hangs about in seeming strips as of rope yarn, or clotted ringlet. Against the anchoritical beard and moustache—both in a wild state of vegetation—it would perhaps, in these hirsute days, be treason to utter a syllable.

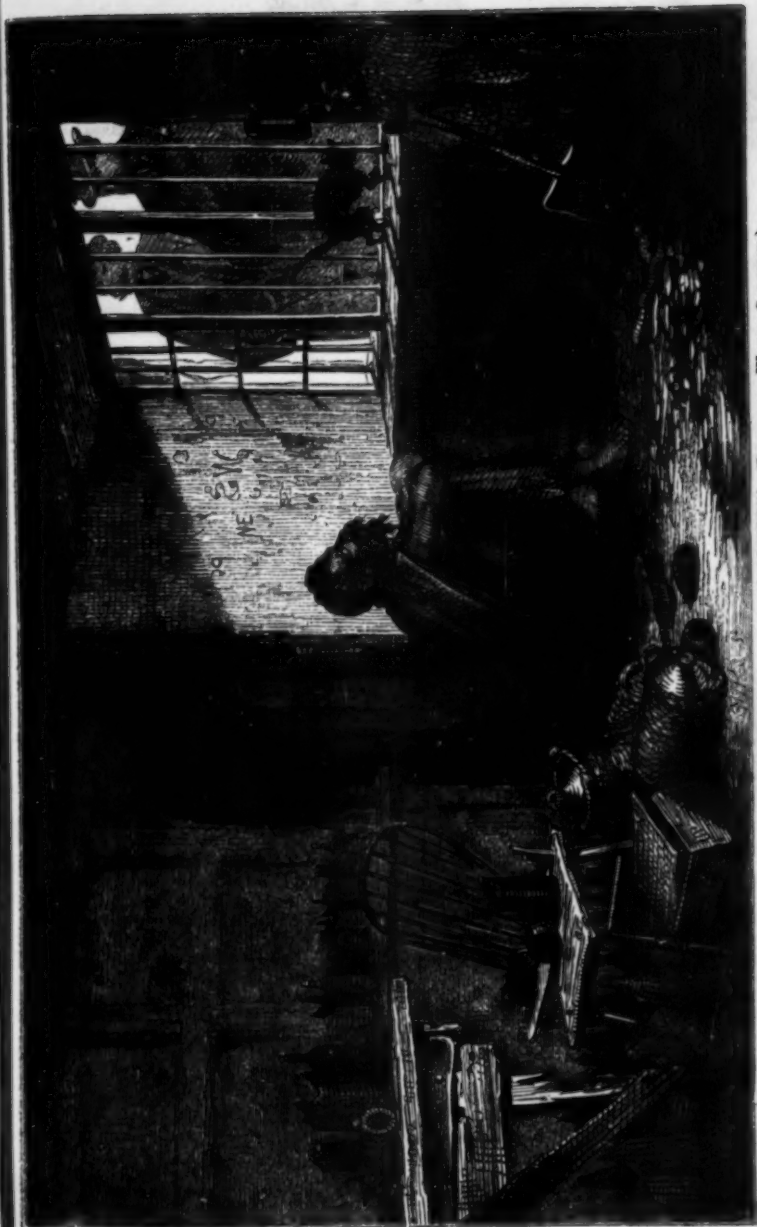
And what are we to say of the anchoritical countenance? It is not a remarkably handsome one certainly; but on the other hand it is not remarkably ugly. Neither is it of a low type. On the contrary, there is a good deal of intelligence and strength of will indicated in those clearly defined features. The forehead is lofty and well-shaped; the eyes are large and expressive; the nose if somewhat aspiring is solid and satisfactory. But what of these lips that project so heavily from the face, and that seem to tell of the ardent temperament which can brook no restraint upon its strong desires? This is never the lip of a hermit, or, if so, it is a hermit whose cell is not always unsocial, and who does not incessantly occupy himself in mortifying the flesh.

There is no denying it. The hermit is not a hermit of the good old orthodox kind. He does not turn away from his breakfast with ascetic repugnance, or fail in the duty he owes to his dinner. When he wants fresh stores he sends for them; and when his tradesmen want money he pays them by a cheque upon his banker. Fancy a hermit who keeps a banking account! An archbishop who keeps guinea pigs would not seem half so incongruous.

The hermit has evidently been stimulated by our arrival, and by the conversation of which of course he has had the greatest share, and self-satisfaction now shows itself very plainly in his features. He begins to banter us in a friendly, not to say paternal manner; he cracks one or two good-humoured jokes; he laughs aloud, a lusty and

full-blooded laugh. Then feeling, as it would seem, more and more sociable and convivial, he asks us if we will take a glass of wine. It is an offer he invariably makes to strangers with whom he is pleased, so we know by this sign that we are among the number. Yet we have heard so much of the state of his glasses, and have seen so much of the state of his cell, that we plead a cold, and respectfully decline the honour of taking wine with him, unusual and difficult as the honour of taking wine with a hermit may be. Our companion, however, in a self-sacrificing and heroic spirit, accepts the offer made him. Hereupon the hermit lights a small dip candle at the fire, in doing which he accidentally strikes his foot against some hard substance, and shows, by certain consequent contortions of feature, that his frame is not proof against pain. He passes into a small ante-room between the kitchen and the wash-house, and occupies himself for a few minutes in the obscurity of that apartment, groping, it would seem, amongst his stores. When he returns, it is as the bearer of a bottle of sherry and a wine-glass. In justice to the hermit's domestic arrangements it must be admitted that the glass was really clean; and in justice to his hospitality, it should be stated that the sherry, according to my companion's testimony, had no graver fault than that of having been uncorked a trifle too long.

At this point the eager air and manner of the hermit indicate his alacrity and readiness for another discussion. He evidently foresees a triumphant opportunity of cutting every inch of ground from beneath our feet, and of leaving us—articles of supererogation not being of his creed—not a leg to stand upon. He is particularly anxious to impress upon me that I am puffed out with intellectual pride—mentally distended by fallacy and assumption. As I am at 8***** for the purpose of adding to my stores of knowledge, I do not reject this piece of information—unceremoniously as it may be flung into my wallet—but thankfully accept everything that is



MR. MOPES THE HERMIT RECEIVING 'LONDON SOCIETY.' (DRAWN BY WALDO SARGENT.)

the first of these was the death of his mother, which he learned of on the 10th of January 1747. He was then only ten years of age, and his father, who was a poor farmer, was obliged to leave him in the care of his grandmother, who lived at a distance of some miles from his father's house.

He remained with his grandmother until the year 1750, when he was sent to school at a small village near his father's house. He was then twelve years of age, and his father, who was now a better off man, was able to send him to a more respectable school.

He remained at this school until the year 1753, when he was sent to a school at a larger village. He was then fifteen years of age, and his father, who was now a well-to-do man, was able to send him to a more respectable school. He remained at this school until the year 1756, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village.

He remained at this school until the year 1759, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village. He was then eighteen years of age, and his father, who was now a well-to-do man, was able to send him to a more respectable school. He remained at this school until the year 1762, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village.

He remained at this school until the year 1765, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village. He was then twenty-one years of age, and his father, who was now a well-to-do man, was able to send him to a more respectable school. He remained at this school until the year 1768, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village.

He remained at this school until the year 1771, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village. He was then twenty-four years of age, and his father, who was now a well-to-do man, was able to send him to a more respectable school. He remained at this school until the year 1774, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village.

He remained at this school until the year 1777, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village. He was then twenty-seven years of age, and his father, who was now a well-to-do man, was able to send him to a more respectable school. He remained at this school until the year 1780, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village.

He remained at this school until the year 1783, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village. He was then thirty years of age, and his father, who was now a well-to-do man, was able to send him to a more respectable school. He remained at this school until the year 1786, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village.

He remained at this school until the year 1789, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village. He was then thirty-three years of age, and his father, who was now a well-to-do man, was able to send him to a more respectable school. He remained at this school until the year 1792, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village.

He remained at this school until the year 1795, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village. He was then thirty-six years of age, and his father, who was now a well-to-do man, was able to send him to a more respectable school. He remained at this school until the year 1798, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village.

He remained at this school until the year 1801, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village. He was then thirty-nine years of age, and his father, who was now a well-to-do man, was able to send him to a more respectable school. He remained at this school until the year 1804, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village.

He remained at this school until the year 1807, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village. He was then forty-two years of age, and his father, who was now a well-to-do man, was able to send him to a more respectable school. He remained at this school until the year 1810, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village.

He remained at this school until the year 1813, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village. He was then forty-five years of age, and his father, who was now a well-to-do man, was able to send him to a more respectable school. He remained at this school until the year 1816, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village.

He remained at this school until the year 1819, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village. He was then forty-eight years of age, and his father, who was now a well-to-do man, was able to send him to a more respectable school. He remained at this school until the year 1822, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village.

He remained at this school until the year 1825, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village. He was then fifty-one years of age, and his father, who was now a well-to-do man, was able to send him to a more respectable school. He remained at this school until the year 1828, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village.

He remained at this school until the year 1831, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village. He was then fifty-four years of age, and his father, who was now a well-to-do man, was able to send him to a more respectable school. He remained at this school until the year 1834, when he was sent to a school at a still larger village.

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offered, and meekly call upon the hermit to proceed.

And he does proceed! He overturns my opinions with ruthless energy, he kicks them when they are down, he pummels them with his two fists; and in a short time they are so bruised and disfigured as to be scarcely recognizable.

For instance, when I happen to express the not very original or startling opinion that England is a free country, he laughs aloud with ineffable contempt, and declares he would rather live in a despotic country.

'As, for example, in France under Louis Napoleon,' I say, with innocent maliciousness.

'Oh! Louis Napoleon's a humbug—I haven't a word to say in his favour,' the hermit replies. 'When I say a despotic country, I mean such a country as Russia.'

Upon this I ask him his reasons, and he unhesitatingly answers, in words which certainly seem as much a reiteration of his already expressed sentiment, as an explanation or defence of it—

'Because the government is a despotism.'

I venture to inquire what there is in a despotism which proves so alluring to him, and he tells me it is its simplicity and its efficiency. Power, instead of being in the hands of the ignorant many, is in the hands of the educated few. The highest men in the country fill the highest offices of state, and consequently the wants of the people are better provided for than they would be if left to the intelligence of the people themselves. As a natural consequence, all goes on easily; the government has no difficulty in carrying out whatever measures it may think desirable, and everybody is satisfied.

Here I venture to remark that this might be the case, and doubtless would be under an ideal despotism, enlightened and paternal; but that it certainly is not the case just now in Russia, where all does not go on easily, where the peasants are agitated, the students refractory, the nobility discontented, and society, in a word, completely disorganized.

Hereupon the hermit candidly admits that he refers to the Russia of Nicholas rather than to that of Alexander, of which he knows but little; a confession of ignorance he would have been spared, as I cannot help thinking, if he had looked a little more closely into those misguiding newspapers of which he has so poor an opinion.

Then by a gradual transition we advance upon far more delicate ground. The hermit mentions that of the many visitors he receives in the course of the year, many are zealous Protestants, who endeavour to convert him to their way of thinking, but that he invariably opposes such a bold front to their arguments, that nothing comes of their attempt. He adds, that although not a Roman Catholic, he leans towards Roman Catholicism—is, in fact, a determined Tractarian.

I cannot refrain from expressing my surprise at this announcement, or of thinking that St. Barnabas would be rather startled if this Hertfordshire convert suddenly made his appearance in Knightsbridge *en couverture*. But the hermit, in his turn, seems surprised that I should see anything remarkable in his confession, and goes on to assure me that his religious views are quite in harmony with his political views. He then informs me he is a Tory—not a follower of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli—but a Tory of the good old stamp. Lest this should perplex me, he enters upon an explanation of his meaning. He tells me that a Tory originally meant, in other days, a man whose guiding principle in all things was, 'Do unto others as you would they should do unto you;' a curious piece of information, which I recommend to the attention of all students of history.

Then he tells me that the Tories, even when newly formed as a party, gave a proof of their political sagacity and patriotic enlightenment, by supporting the cause of King James II. As this illustration does not by any means impress me, the hermit begins an eloquent vindication of the conduct of that cruelly-treated monarch. Never, it appears, was there a sovereign more magnanimous or more

enlightened, more anxious to advance his country's welfare, or more intent upon furthering the cause of true religion.

This comes upon me like a small clap of thunder, and I can only at first reply that these views are strangely opposed to those of Macaulay. But at mere mention of that name, the hermit loses all patience, and bestows more abusive epithets upon the departed historian than I should care to repeat, or the readers of 'London Society' to be informed of. At this I am stunned again, and when the hermit assures me that virtuous King James never broke the law, anxious as he might be to advance the interests of his religion, I allude quite timidly to his treatment of the universities, in contradiction of that statement. But the hermit tells me I may make my mind quite easy upon this point, and that I may consider all historical documents which do not prove his case to be the merest forgeries; and as I am getting cold in the feet, and feel my argumentative power growing damp and spongy, I admit I am vanquished, and meekly lay down my arms.

That I do so evidently gratifies the hermit, for it is his desire to be regarded as a conqueror over all kinds of opponents. It is easy to see, indeed, that he likes to be thought superior to the common run of mankind, and that he strives to show he has a vast amount of wisdom stowed away under his dirt and his blanket, and that though he has abandoned the world, the world cannot very well afford to abandon him. For he tells me somewhat exultingly, that he never seeks out any one—it is his visitors who seek out him.

'I have had as many as twelve thousand in one year,' he adds, 'and as many as two hundred and forty in one day. I counted them and made a note of the numbers. I dare say, now, you think you see a good deal of the world, but I can tell you (do you un—?) that I see more of it than you can dream of. I have spoken here with the very highest in the land and with the

very lowest. They are all as one to me. I adapt my conversation to their capacity and station. The other day I had some of the London swell mob here, and every day I have no end of tramps.' (Three were then loitering about the entrance of the pathway, and to these he afterwards gave coppers according to his custom.) 'I can talk slang with a thief, and religion with a clergyman. I'm not afraid of talking with any one.'

Though the hermit thus boasted of his superiority over most men, it was curious to observe that he was by no means indifferent to the opinion of others, but, on the contrary, decidedly anxious to stand well with the world. He was terribly annoyed, for instance, at the account given of him in 'Tom Tiddler's Ground,' and took pains to point out to me some few inaccuracies in Mr. Traveller's narrative.

'I need not tell you,' he said, 'that the artist, and M. François Thierry, and the carpenter, and Miss Kimmee, are all fictitious personages, for that any sensible man must see; for himself; but I solemnly assure you that no such conversation as that said to have occurred between Mr. Traveller and myself ever took place here, and that, therefore, every line is the merest invention. In fact,' he added, 'I will go so far as to express my deliberate opinion that Mr. Traveller never came here at all, but drew his picture entirely from hearsay.'

Then, too, at parting, the hermit evidently was anxious that our interview should leave a favourable impression upon my mind.

'You'll admit,' he said, as he offered me his index finger in exchange for my outstretched hand, 'that I have fairly met every argument you have made use of, that there is a great deal to be said on both sides, and that I have given you some new ideas upon old subjects.' And he affably bade me adieu.

One circumstance very much struck me. The hermit never attempted to defend his strange mode of existence, or to recommend its

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adoption by others. He said—less in answer to my questions than to my thoughts—that he was compelled to lead the life he at present leads. It was the only means he had of escaping the persecution of relatives. What magic charm there was in his blanket and dirt which enabled him to counteract the influence of those relatives he did not explain, nor did I inquire, for there was a hesitation in his manner when speaking upon this point which forcibly suggested to me the idea of insincerity. He faltered like a man who tells a story that he feels will not be believed. And it should be noted that he seemed quite aware of the interpretation likely to be placed upon his present mode of life by those who are specially interested in his conduct.

‘I have made no will,’ he said, ‘and of course it would be of no use to make one now; it would inevitably be set aside.’

I could not help thinking, however, that if presumptive evidence were wanted for the purpose of disproving the charge he made against his relatives, it was to be found in the fact that those relatives take no steps, apparently, to prevent him from leading his present extraordinary life.

In the neighbourhood, too, no importance is attached to the statements he makes in explanation of his conduct. I do not know what the opinion is of the landlord of the ‘Peal of Bells,’ and perhaps there might be some difficulty in finding that sententious and contemplative ale-house keeper; but the landlord of the Railway Inn at S*****, who is almost equally sententious and contemplative, and who is evidently well acquainted with the hermit’s antecedents, discredits the story of persecution altogether. He will tell you, as you sit in his neat little sanded parlour, and listen to his quaint gossip, that he has known Mr. L**** for years, and that he knew his father before him. He will add, that even as a boy the hermit was remarkably froward and self-willed, and that as he grew in years he became even more averse to restraint.

Then he will relate an anecdote in support of these assertions. He will

tell you how the hermit would shut himself up in his room and resolutely refuse to come forth, when he lived with near relatives years before. How food was placed outside his door, accordingly, by those relatives. How, by way of a compromise to mere conventional arrangements, he did not object to eat what was thus supplied to him; but, concession ending there, pertinaciously refused to surrender the plates and dishes upon which his meals had been placed. How, as a natural consequence, those plates and dishes accumulated in his room until there was not a single piece of table crockeryware to be found in any other part of the house.

When you have heard this and similar stories, and reflected upon the difficulty of carrying on a household with an inmate prone to indulge in such eccentricities, you will perhaps form your own opinion as to the real cause of the hermit’s present unsocial mode of existence.

Whatever may be that cause, whether it be the persecution of relatives, a capricious and quarrelsome temper, some singular form of madness, or mere morbid love of notoriety, the fact remains the same.

Here is a man who is still young—he is scarcely middle-aged—who, if not a profound scholar, is at least well educated; who is conversant with the habits of good society, and who can express himself in well-chosen and thoughtful language; who has a fair competence, and what was once a pleasant home, and who might take a place among his fellow-men at once dignified, honourable, and useful. We find him, instead, huddled up in a blanket, grovelling in a noisome kitchen, throwing away his income upon the idle tramp or the lazy vagrant, and exhibiting himself as a curiosity to all who choose to gaze upon him.

It is impossible not to feel that here are rich gifts rendered profitless, and a life that might be fruitful in results utterly running to waste.

Let us be charitable in our judgment, however. Whether the man would delude others, or is himself deluded, he is equally worthy of our pity.

E. C.

MAY IN LONDON.

* 'Tis the merry month of May.'—CHAUCER.

MONTH of sunshine, mirth, and flowers,
 Genial airs, and gracious showers;
 Beautiful and radiant May,
 Thou art Nature's holiday!
 Though in populous city pent,
 We are wont to be content
 With thy town aspect and dress,
 Yet we do not love thee less
 Than the hind who tracks thee out
 By thy cuckoo's wandering shout;
 By thy hedgerow's clustering bloom;
 By thy violet's faint perfume;
 Golden cowslip, primrose pale,
 Scattered through each verdant vale;
 And thy smile so warm and bright,
 Turning saddest hues to light!

Though our very souls are sick
 Of this wilderness of brick,
 And we may not hope to trace
 Half thy beauty, half thy grace,
 Through the dim and murky screen
 Here, that veils thy glorious mien;
 Though we look for thee in vain
 As becomes thy woodland reign;
 Flower-crowned brow, and vesture green,
 That bespeak the sylvan queen;—
 Yet, by many a sign, e'en here
 We can feel when thou art near;
 Scent far off thy dewy wreath,
 Taste thy pulse-enlivening breath;
 Stealing sweets but to dispense
 To the world-worn wanderer's sense,
 Sweeter spells that call him back
 On a long, untrodden track,
 Which, ere yet his heart was wrung,
 Oft he traced when life was young:
 And though his bliss is dashed with pain,
 He lives that sweet May month again,
 And feels his heart with yearnings glow
 He thought had perished years ago!

ALABIC A. WATTS.

LONDON MEMORIES:

No. I.—Old Fleet Street.



LUDGATE.

FROM the foot of Ludgate Hill to Temple Bar may be a space of eight hundred yards or less, yet it is large enough to hold the memories of as many years. Since London was a city, its liberty of Fleet Street, in the ward

of Farringdon Without, has been a notability. As the direct highway of communication between the City and the palace, the parliament, law-courts, and woolstaple of Westminster, kings and queens have traversed and sojourned in it; lords, spiritual and temporal, have built mansions in it; erminent judges and coifed sergeants-at-law on their mules and palfreys, mail-clad knights on their destriers, Flemish merchants preceding strings of laden hackneys, rows of burgesses in furred robes pacing with civic petitions, files of armed soldiers marching to music with flags flying in the van of a triumph or an obsequy, have all worn its stones. Its area has afforded scope for revolutionary outbreak, as when, in the reign of Richard II., the furious rabble of Kent and Essex rushed down it to pillage the Savoy Palace; of social jealousies, as when, in the reign of Henry VI., the townsmen of the ward and the gownsmen of the Inns of Court fought out 'a great fray' therein, in which the queen's attorney-general was slain; for the execution of judicial sentences, as when, in the same reign, Eleanor Duchess of Gloucester did penance for her sorceries, by walking 'with a taper of waxe of two pound in hir hande through Fleete Streete, hoodlesse (save a kercheffe), to Paul's, where she offered hir taper at the high altar;*' or for theologico-political demonstration, as when, in 1679, during the agitation that preceded the passing of the Duke of York's

* Stowe's 'Annals.'

Exclusion Bill, effigies of the pope, the devil, cardinals, and superiors of the chief monastic orders were carried in state to Temple Bar, and there burnt, amid the blaze of fireworks and the blare of horns. Into most of its houses the great plague-angel entered, and touched some victim. Well-nigh adown its whole length the Great Fire winged its devouring flight.

There is scarcely an inch of this soil without its memorial in history. Let us place ourselves under the guidance of some wandering Jew, Cartophilus, Ahasuerus, or by whatsoever name he may be known, whose sleepless eyes have for ever pursued the vicissitudes of Old Fleet Street, at whose summons its ghost will resume its material tenement. From a score of veracious chronicles, the work of such necromancers, beginning with that of Matthew Paris, and ending with that of Peter Cunningham, have been disinterred the following memoranda.

The City of London proper, as it stood in the middle ages, was encircled by a strong wall, pierced with divers gates, and moated with a deep fosse. The gate of Ludgate, by which the citizens had egress westward — a quaint structure adorned with the effigies of King Lud and his successors — stood a short distance below the brow of the hill which bears its name. It was used as a debtor's prison since the close of the fourteenth century. The wall, in this part of its course, ran in a line parallel to that of the present Farringdon and Bridge Streets, till it terminated on the river's bank. Immediately outside the gate we cross the fosse or town ditch by a drawbridge. Passing the Bailey, where the chamberlains of the City formerly held their courts, we come to Fleet Lane. Here, as early as the first year of Richard I., was a gaol, some representative of which lasted until our own day. The rebels under Wat Tyler burst open and burnt it.

A second structure perished in the Great Fire; and a third met with a kindred fate in the Gordon riots of 1780. In these dungeons, for sundry political and religious offences, have lingered Lord Surrey the poet, Hooper, bishop and martyr, Donne, divine and satirist, Prynne the antiquary, and Penn the Quaker. The Star Chamber's victims generally were here confined. Among the ignobler occupants were, according to fiction, Sir John Falstaffe, and, according to fact, the licentious Wycherley and the turbulent Savage. In the last century the cruelties practised on the prisoners excited public indignation, and became the subject of judicial inquiry. A reputation of a different, yet not less scandalous character hangs over the now deserted area, once known as the precinct or rules of the Fleet. There, until the middle of the last century, at any hour of the day or night was to be found 'a squalid, profligate figure, clad in a tattered plaid nightgown, with a fiery face,* a disrobed parson, who, for a consideration of gin and tobacco, was ready to link in matrimonial bonds any who came to him, without going through the preliminary ceremony of banns, or asking the consent of parents and guardians. His good offices have been put in requisition by runaway couples of all ranks and ages—sometimes a gallant youth and faithful maiden, honourable refugees from the constraint of an obdurate father or stepmother; more frequently a scoundrelly adventurer and a romantic school-girl of rank, the besotted victim of his designs on her fortune.

The prison walls were washed by the river Flete. A broad, and as its name implies, a rapid stream this. Issuing from Hampstead Heath, it flowed through what are now the suburbs of Kentish and Camden Towns; was spanned by a bridge called Battle, in memory of an encounter of Alfred with the Danes, on the site of the modern King's Cross; a little further on, took the names of the River of Wells, as it received the tributes of Bagnigge and kindred springs, and of Turnmill Brook,

* Pennant's 'London.'

from its utility; was again bridged over at the bottom of Holborn Hill, down which the Old Bourne rushed to meet it, and finally emptied itself into the Thames. An anchor found some years since near Battle Bridge evidences the ancient navigability of the Flete for two or three miles upward. It was so wide and deep within the memory of men living in 1307, that ten or twelve ships, laden with sea-coal, could sail up it as far as Oldbourne Bridge, but at that period had become so narrowed by the erection of wharves on its banks, and the diversion of its waters to turn the Templars' mills at Baynard's Castle, that the Earl of Lincoln petitioned the King's Council for its cleansing. Some amelioration of its condition was the result, but it never recovered its old glory, and sank by degrees into a noisome kennel, under the title of Fleet Ditch, which was happily vaulted over in 1733, when the Fleet Market was planned. A bridge of some sort must always have spanned its channel at this point. The most noteworthy was erected by John Wells, Mayor of the City, in 1431, who caused his own name, 'embraced by angels,* to be graven on the coping. Forty years afterwards the inhabitants set up a cistern of spring water thereupon. After the Fire, which destroyed the old bridge, another was built, which remained until 1765.

Crossing the river, we enter the street which bears its name. Immediately on the left is ground consecrated to the holy St. Bridget, or St. Bride. In oldest time her well lay here, the gracious effluence of whose waters has haply cured many a credulous, woe-weary pilgrim of his illa ghostly and bodily. Hard by was a church, where such an one might pay his vows of thanksgiving for deliverance. 'Of old time a small thing' was this church, as Stowe tells us; but by the piety and wealth of Master William Viner, Warden of the Fleet Prison in 1480, it was greatly enlarged. His punning monogram of a vine with grapes and leaves was wrought thereon in stone. Divers

* Stowe's 'Survey.'

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spoliations were committed on the ancient edifice ere the Great Fire completed its ruin. Sir Christopher Wren's wand restored it to more than its old beauty, and bestowed on it the second steeple in the metropolis. In the churchyard are buried Wynkyn de Worde, printer, Lord Buckhurst, and Richard Lovelace, poets, and Samuel Richardson, novelist. At a house overlooking the same spot John Milton temporarily resided.

Near here, on the north side, the Bishop of St. David's had his London inn or mansion. Where is now Bride Lane stood from the time of the Conquest a royal palace. Parts of it were destroyed in 1087, and subsequently, to furnish stones for erecting St. Paul's Church; but as late as the reign of Henry III. the building was still sufficiently large to accommodate the King's Court, Parliament, and Tribunal of Justice. It gradually fell into decay, as the Palace of Westminster increased in size and beauty, and lay in ruins until 1522, when Henry VIII. restored it to temporary splendour for the reception of the retinue which attended the Emperor Charles V. Hurriedly, but sumptuously, a fair new palace was upraised, having a gallery of communication over the Fleet with the Monastery of the Black Friars, where the emperor himself was lodged. In this new Palace of Bridewell Henry afterwards held frequent courts and councils. There it was that the great synod of divines met to discuss the validity of his marriage with the virtuous and hapless Katharine. There he summoned a special assembly of nobles and commoners to hear his own specious argument on this theme. There, for the last time, he and his queen dwelt together as man and wife, on the night before the court was held at the Black Friars to pronounce their marriage void. Twenty-four years after, behold the palace handed over by Edward VI. to the Mayor and citizens for a House of Industry and Correction. Thenceforward, to the idle courtier with curling locks, ruffling it in slashed

sleeves and purled doublet, frittering his hours in antechamber gossip, succeeded the idle 'prentice with close-cropped poll, in coarse prison garb, picking oakum with unnatural diligence under pressure of whipcord. Bridewell was subsequently devoted almost exclusively to female delinquents; and Hogarth's fourth scene of 'The Harlot's Progress' is accordingly laid there.

Advancing, we pass on the left the inn of another Right Reverend Father, my Lord Bishop of Salisbury. The court-yard or quadrangle still preserves its memory. The mansion was in the sixteenth century made over to the Sackvilles; and Lord Buckhurst, afterwards Earl of Dorset, here wrote the tragedy of 'Ferrex and Porrex.' When the old house decayed its barn was turned into a theatre, called Salisbury Court Theatre, which stood until the Fire. The site then took the name of Dorset Court, and on another portion of it Wren built a new theatre, called 'the Duke of York's, or Dorset Gardens', of which Sir William Davenant was the lessee, and whose walls have echoed to the sonorous voice of Betterton. John Dryden and John Locke had houses in the same quadrangle.

In Shoe Lane, opposite, was the workhouse to which the body of Thomas Chatterton was borne after his suicide, and in the burying-ground adjoining which it was interred. At the south side of Shoe Lane a water conduit was erected, in 1471, by the executors of Sir William Eastfield, mayor, deceased. The water was conveyed from Paddington in leaden pipes. A few years afterwards, the inhabitants of the street, worthily grateful for the gift, added a cistern to the conduit, and 'builded on the same a faire tower of stone, garnished with images of St. Christopher on the top and angels round about lower downe, with sweet-sounding bells before them, whereupon, by an engine placed in the tower, they divers houres of the day and night chymed such an hymne as was appointed.*' This standard, as it was

* Stowe's 'Survey.'

called, gave place to a larger about a century later. At Peterborough Court beyond was once the inn of the bishop of that see. At Wine-Office Court, Goldsmith had lodgings for a short term. At Crane Court, in a large mansion built by Wren, the Royal Society held its meetings during the greater part of the last century. The Society of Arts took its rise at a library in this court.

On the left we now come to the far-famed White Friars. Here the white-hooded brethren of the Blessed Mary of Mount Carmel were established in 1241 by Sir Richard Gray, a knight of a noble house. Their church was rebuilt for them by Hugh Courtney, Earl of Devonshire, in 1350, and received divers additions in succeeding reigns. Many a Gray of Codnor and Wilton, and many a Courtney, lie buried under the soil of the ancient choir. The friars owned much of the land hereabouts; among other places the hostel of Bolton Town, the name of which still maintains a corrupt existence. At the general dissolution of monasteries the Carmelites surrendered their house and church. The hall, or refectory of the former was turned into a theatre. In the 'Friary House' John Selden long lived 'in a conjugal way with the Countess of Kent,'* and there died in 1654. Stowe mentions that on the site of the old monastery were 'many fair houses builded, lodgings for noblemen and other.' In the vicinity of these sprung up many houses, anything but fair, and intended for any but noble men. The precinct of the White Friars was, from early times, a sanctuary for criminals and debtors. The accident often survives the essence, and the dissolution of this sanctity had no effect upon its odour. Felons, outlaws, rogues and vagabonds of every description, flocked to this place of refuge, which soon took the popular name of Alsatia, probably from its resemblance to the debatable land of Alsace, on the French frontier. Lombard Street (where the printing office of Messrs. Bradbury and Evans—for-

* Anthony A'Wood.

merly the George Tavern—is situate), was, no doubt, christened by debtors in mockery of their wealthy creditors. What was originally a house of prayer became a den of thieves; and Sir Walter Scott's Nigel must have been the only gentleman ever seen in the place. The law and its myrmidons were set at defiance. 'Amid a rabble so desperate no peace-officer's life was in safety. At the cry of "Rescue!" bullies, with swords and cudgels, and termagant hags, with spits and broomsticks, poured forth by hundreds; and the intruder was fortunate if he escaped back into Fleet Street hustled, stripped, and pumped upon. Even the warrant of the Chief Justice of England could not be executed without the help of a company of musketeers.'* The besom of the Great Fire did not utterly sweep clean this Augean stable of pollution, but what it failed to do was at last completed by a statute passed in the 8th & 9th Willam III.

Ere we part from this neighbourhood, let us cast an eye at White Friars Street, previously known as Water Lane. There, at the sign of the Harrow, lived John Filby, tailor, immortalized as the maker of Oliver Goldsmith's 'bloom-coloured coat.'

Within earshot of the lawless turbulence of Alsatia, the grave officers of the law, judges, and sergeants, established their guild. Here, and in the kindred inn beside Chancery Lane, we find them settled since the fifteenth century. The inn, as a corporation, remains, but in this its ancient home not a single brother now dwells.

Thence till beyond the Bar is the liberty of the Temple. In the early part of the reign of Henry II., the knights of Solomon's Temple removed hither from Holborn. Here, in 1185, they erected the Round Church, whose Norman doorway, columns of Purbeck marble, and tombs of red-cross knights, are among the most cherished art-monuments yet spared to us in London. Strangest of all anomalies, this brotherhood of soldier-priests, pilgrims

* Macaulay's History of England, vol. i.



FLEET STREET A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

DRAWN BY WILLIAM M'CONNELL.

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and knights-errant, regular Canons, and irregular freebooters, Colebuses and Lotharios, the terror alike of Islam and Christendom, and, save the Order of Jesus, perhaps the most powerful confederation that the world ever saw, maintained itself here against all aggression for upwards of two centuries, and grew fat on the fairest lands of England. Here, so renowned was the stronghold, would fearful men commit their treasure to the keeping of the Templars. Here, when at the order of Henry III., Hubert de Burgh's deposit was surrendered, were 'found, besides ready money, vessels of gold and silver unpraisable, and many precious stones, which would make all men wonder if they knew the worth of them.* A season of panic, however, came at last. Fortunate were those depositors who withdrew their balance before 1283, when Edward I., under pretext of inspecting his mother's jewels, suddenly entered the bank with a posse of officers, and lightened those coffers which he chanced to find to the tune of 1000*l*. Even a Plantagenet king would scarcely have ventured on such an outrage, had not the downfall of the bankers been manifestly impending. In 1308 the Templars fell with a great crash, and their lands changed owners. The Earls of Lancaster and Pembroke, and the younger Despenser had each a brief tenure of the New Temple, as it was still called; but its next permanent proprietors were the Knights of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. They, however, having a fine seat of their own at Clerkenwell, never cared to live here, and shortly after the king's grant, leased the property to the students of the common law. They continued to be its lessees until the dissolution of the Hospital, when they obtained a grant in fee.

A graver brotherhood than their predecessors in coats of mail, these Templars in gowns of stuff and silk, yet not without their genial side, as the rules laid down for their government abundantly testify. What a shout of indignant protest would resound throughout the precinct

* Stowe's 'Survey.'

from King's Bench Walk to Devereux Court, were the revival of the old régime attempted!—if the decrees made in the reign of Elizabeth were still in force, 'that no hatt, or long, or curled hair be worn, or any gowns but such as be of a sad colour: that no fellow of this house wear his beard above three weeks' growth, upon pain of XX*s* forfeiture: and that none go in cloaks, hatts, bootes, and spurrs, but when they ride out of the town!'* Rare doings at Christmas in the way of banquetings and mummings distinguished the Temple above all the Inns of Court. It was, doubtless, on some such occasion that Geoffrey Chaucer, when a student, so far forgot himself as to beat a Franciscan friar in Fleet Street, and thereby incur a fine of two shillings. The Lord of Misrule seems to have been a conscientious functionary, as one may gather from the limitations of his power which it was found needful to enforce in 1633.—'That there be no drinking of healths, nor any wine or tobacco offered or sold within the House—that there shall not be any knocking with boxes, or calling aloud for gamesters, and that there be not any going abroad out of the circuit of this House, or without any of the gates, by any lord or other gentleman to break open any house or chamber.' At the magnificent Christmas entertainment given here in the 4th of Elizabeth, Robert Dudley, afterwards Earl of Leicester, was 'Constable Marshal,' and the 'Master of the Game,' was Christopher Hatton, subsequently the Terpsichorean Chancellor immortalized by Gray—

'My grave Lord Keeper led the bowls,
The seals and maces danced before him.'

Rather a tedious business one of these banquets would seem to us. 'After the first course is served in,' we read, 'the constable marshall cometh into the hall, arrayed with a fair rich compleat harneys, white, and bright, and gilt, with a nest of fetters of all colours upon his crest and helm, and a gilt poleaxe in his hand,' accompanied by divers other officers and musicians. 'Which

* Dugdale's 'Origines Judiciales.'

persons with the drums, trumpets, and musick, go three times about the fire. Then the constable marshal, after two or three curtesies made, kneeleth down before the Lord Chancellor; behind him the lieutenant, and they kneeling, the constable marshal pronounceth an oration of a quarter of an hour's length, thereby declaring the purpose of his coming.* Various other ceremonies are then gone through, among which is the entry of a 'huntsman into the hall, with a fox, and a purse-net with a cat, both bound at the end of a staff, and with them nine or ten couple of hounds, with the blowing of hunting-hornes. And the fox and cat are by the hounds set upon and killed beneath the fire. 'This sport finished,' it is satisfactory to learn that the second course was served. The entertainment is brought to a close by 'the antientest master of the revells, who singeth a song with the assistance of others there present.' These jollities take place at the midday dinner. After supper the fun waxes faster. 'The constable marshal presents himself with drums afore him, mounted upon a scaffold, borne by four men, and goeth three times round about the harthe, crying out aloud, "A lord! a lord!" Then he descendeth, and goeth to dance, &c. And after, he calleth his court every one by name, one by one, in this manner, "Sir Randle Rackabite, of Rascall Hall, in the County of Rakehell—Sir Morgan Mumchance, of Much Monckery, in the County of Mad Mopery," &c. This done, the Lord of Misrule addresseth himself to the banquet, which ended with some minstrelsy, mirth, and dancing, every man departeth to rest.* Mighty pretty diversions these to vary the monotony of 'Grand Mootes' and 'Vacation Exercises'—not to be sneered at by opera-and-ball-going Templars of these degenerate days, if by no stretch of imagination to be deemed mirthful.

The Temple suffered grievously from the wanton violence of the rebels of Kent and Essex, in 1381, who burnt the houses and books of the tenant, in hatred to the land-

* Dugdale.

lord, Robert Hailes, Lord Prior of St. John's. The division of the House into Inner and Middle took place subsequent to this event. Of the former, Beaumont the dramatist, and Browne the pastoral poet, were members; of the latter, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir John Davies, John Ford, and Richard Congreve. In the Temple Church are buried John Selden, whose chambers were in Paper Buildings, and Oliver Goldsmith, who ended his days in his lodgings at Brick Court. The office of Master, or Preacher at the Church, reckons Hooker and Usher among its occupants.

On both sides of the street we now look on classic ground. Samuel Johnson's chambers, in Inner Temple Lane, Bolt Court, and Johnson's Court, and the tavern where he set up his oracle, are well-worn places of pilgrimage. Here Goldsmith made Boswell so jealous by his vain-glorious boast of intimacy with the chief's household: 'I go to Miss Williams!' There the boy Samuel Rogers, verses in hand, came to sue for a generous criticism, tremblingly raised the knocker, but fled before the terrible creak of the approaching despot's shoes. Yonder room in the Mitre has echoed to the autocrat's sententious dogmas, the pregnant wisdom of Burke, the fine fancy and uncouth blunders of Goldsmith, the solemn egotism of Reynolds, and the broad jests of Garrick. According to a doubtful tradition, the voice of one greater than all these has sounded in the Mitre—that of William Shakspeare, whose 'rime' of 'From the rich Lavinian shore,' is said to have been composed there.

Fetter, anciently Fewtars Lane, the whilome haunt of fewtars or idle people, lies next in our path. In later times it could boast of a denizen anything but idle, Thomas Hobbes. In its neighbourhood were gardens within Stowe's memory. At both its extremities, scaffolds for public executions were erected so late as the last century. A church dedicated to St. Dunstan occupied the adjoining site from an early period. At its walls the Great Fire stopped its ravages on this side of

the street. In a house adjoining this church the poet Drayton long resided. Outside St. Dunstan's clock, which projected over the footway,



were erected, in 1671, the figures of two savages, which struck the quarters with their clubs. They remained here until the building of the new church some thirty years ago. The residence of Master Robert Clifford, deceased, on the western side of the church was, in the 18th Edward III., leased by his widow, Dame Isabel, to the students of the common law, and has ever since remained in their hands. New Street, known since 1377 as Chancellor, or Chancery Lane, comes next. Its history lies not within the scope of this survey, but we may mention that its change of name arose from the transfer which was then made of the House of Jewish Converts to the Master of the Rolls of Chancery. There being no more Jews in England to convert, after their expulsion by Edward I., the house gradually became

empty, and was finally turned into the Rolls Court. In a house at the corner of this lane, Abraham Cowley was born.

Temple Bar has given its name to the remaining portions of Fleet Street, on either side. Memories throng around us here in such crowds, that but a few can gain vent. The liberty of Farringdon Without, since its first creation, was always bounded hereabouts by bars of some sort—in early times composed of wooden posts linked together with chains. The Strand Street, with its liberties of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Savoy, has immemorially been held to commence there. The view from the Bars, during the middle ages, comprehended the Inns of the Bishops of Exeter, Bath, Chester, and Worcester, and the Savoy Palace of the Duke of Lancaster, each with a garden sloping to the river's edge; the wells of St. Clement, and Holy Well; the Stone Cross where the Judges used to hold pleas; the Chancery Inns of Lyons and St. Clement; the churches of St. Clement Danes and St. Mary; the chapel of the Holy Ghost (near Milford Lane); the Convent Garden of Westminster Abbey, and the Woods of Long Acres, where the Lollards took refuge. The road was so thoroughly a river-side beach, that it was described, in 1315, as blocked up by thickets and bushes. Edward II., Edward III., and Richard II., levied tolls for paving it, and by degrees it became lined on either side by stately mansions. The Earls of Essex, the Dukes of Norfolk, the Earls of Arundel, the Earls of Salisbury, the Earls of Bedford, and the family of Drury, have each left a name there.

The bars and chains* gave place to a 'house of timber,' with a narrow gateway, which, surviving the Fire, was reached by the succeeding tide of renovation. On the summits of both the wooden and the stone structures have been spiked the ghastly heads of traitors—English, Scotch, and Irish—Cavalier, Roundhead, and Jacobite. Monarch after monarch, from Elizabeth to Victoria,

* Strype's Stowe.

has sent a herald to demand entrance at the closed gates, and received on their threshold the keys of the City, from kneeling mayors and aldermen.

In the vicinity of Temple Bar has hived a swarm of literary celebrities. At the Devil Tavern was the great Apollo Room, where Ben Jonson drank canary, and capped verses with his fellow wits; where, in later days, Addison, Swift, and Garth dined together, and, later still, Johnson gave a splendid supper to Mrs. Lennox and the Ivy Lane Club. In the reign of Anne, the Kit-Kat Club, under the secretariat of Jacob Tonson, held its meetings in Shire Lane (now Lower Serle's Place). At the Cock alehouse, Samuel Pepys 'drank, and eat a lobster, and sang, and was mightily merry,' with Mrs. Pierce and Mrs. Knipp. At Dick's Coffee-house, Steele (who lived, and wrote the 'Tatler,' in Shire Lane) often drank a mug of ale. Thence, after reading in the newspaper an article, which his frenzied brain misconstrued into a satire on himself, rushed Cowper with the intention of committing suicide. At George's Coffee-house Shenstone used to read the news. At the Temple Exchange Coffee-house, Goldsmith used to write his letters.

A word, ere this imperfect chronicle of Old Fleet Street closes, touching the vicissitudes that have come over its denizens. In the middle ages we find the guild of hat-workers settled here, whose members were signally worsted in an attempt which they made during the reign

of Edward II., to obtain protection for their trade. At the same time, or later, we hear of the alewives, or breweresses, of Fleet Street, being in high repute. Wax-work exhibitors have fixed their shows here from the sixteenth century downwards. Bankers, represented by Messrs. Child, Hoare, and their brethren, have kept their treasure here since the reign of Charles II. But above all other professions, literature, from the first introduction of printing, evinced a preference for Fleet Street, which it has never withdrawn. Richard Pynson had a printing house at Temple Bar in 1493. Wynkyn de Worde lived at the sign of the Falcon (now Falcon Court), and printed the 'Frutye of Tymes at the sygne of the Some, in Fleete Streete.' Later on, Edmund Curll published at the Dial and Bible, by St. Dunstan's church. Yet later, John Murray, the elder, sent forth 'Childe Harold,' from Falcon Court. At the sign of some celestial or terrestrial object in this microcosm of Fleet Street, has been imprinted many a rare black-letter folio, beloved of bibliomaniacs. Every form of serial, from the one-paged broadside to the many-sheeted monthly, has been issued from the Fleet Street press. The genius and toil of four centuries have hallowed the precinct. A millennium hence, when the records of the nineteenth century come to be incorporated with the Chronicles of Old Fleet Street, it may be that many now among the latest will not then be the least of its literary shrines.



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ROUND ABOUT LONDON:

City Men going to Business.

THERE is not in the whole scheme of London society, with its multifarious plans and arrangements, a daily proceeding more remarkable than that denoted by the title of this paper. City Men—who are they? Where are their homes? How far do they go to business in the morning, and to their own domiciles later in the day? How do they travel? In the old times, the distinction between the City Man and the West-ender was not very marked; for the nobles lived among the traders in the City more unscrupulously than they do now. The trader, but not as a trader, now leaves his desk or his counter when his day's labours are ended, and bends his thoughts towards regions where gentility if not nobility is to be found. He is 'Mr.' in the City, but 'Esq.' at his home; his daughters call him 'papa,' and know very little concerning the City and its usages; City churches they seldom or never visit; and of the Bank some of them affect to know less than of that other bank 'whereon the wild thyme blows.'

It is curious to trace the changes in the mode and degree to which City Men have assorted with the aristocracy in the metropolis. Without going quite so far back as the time of our blue-skinned ancestors, we shall find the metamorphoses remarkable enough. In Fitzstephen's time, in the twelfth century, the nobles and the traders together lived in the great arteries of London, such as Watling Street, Chepe or Cheapside, and Bishopsgate Street; while groups of dealers in certain commodities, congregating somewhat in the same manner as the bazaar-holders in the East, gave names to many other streets still existing. The Thames was a better highway than any other; and was also a playground for water-quintain and other sports in which the youth of London delighted. In the next century the fishmongers occupied stalls up Fish Street to

Grass Church (Gracechurch) Street, where hay was sold; and City Men had to work a passage among the fish as best they could, to get to the London Bridge of those days. If they sought to reach Gravesend, as the first stage in some long and venturesome journey, they (in the time of Richard the Second) paid twopence for the boat-passage, including each man his truss of straw; for the boats had neither seats nor beds, and the passenger endeavoured to keep himself tidy and comfortable under circumstances of no little difficulty. There were no vehicles of any kind for luxurious, idle, or hurried people—folks either rode on horseback or paddled through the mud. After dark, the streets were not deemed safe for his Majesty's lieges; for we find a statute in the time of Edward the First commanding 'that none be so hardy as to be found going or wandering about the streets of the City after curfew toll'd at St. Martin's-le-Grand, unless he be a great man, or other lawful person of good repute, or their certain messengers, having their warrants to go from one to another, with lanthorn in hand.' Two or three generations later, Edward the Third caused faggots to be laid down in the streets when he went to Parliament, to prevent his horse from sticking in the mire. In the same reign a petition was presented to the king, complaining that the public way from Temple Bar to Westminster was so full of pits and sloughs, and so interrupted by thickets and bushes, that neither horseman nor pedestrian could travel safely. Let our City Man think of this when next he hurries from Fleet Street to Charing Cross. In the fifteenth century all the region from London Wall to Islington was a morass or fen, giving rise to the names Moorfields and Fensbury or Finsbury. In 1415, the Lord Mayor caused an opening to be made in the city wall, and a postern gate to be constructed

at the spot which we now recognize as Moorgate Street, to lead to a 'causey' or causeway extending thence to 'Iseldon' and Hoxton. City Men knew little about this region in those days, except to look at their apprentices engaged at archery and bowls in summer, and skating and sliding in winter, on the Moor or Moor-field.

About the year 1500, or within a short period on either side of that date, royalty and aristocracy lived in the City to an extent that we in our day are little in the habit of supposing. There was the regal Baynard Castle, near St. Paul's. There were other royal residences at Tower Royal, Bridewell, Old Jewry, and Fish Street Hill. There were the Earl of Westmoreland's residence in or near Monkwell Street; the Earl of Salisbury's at Dowgate; the Earl of Warwick's in Warwick Lane; the Marquis of Winchester's in Austin Friars; Earl Ferrers' in Lombard Street; the Earl of Northumberland's in Fenchurch Street; the Earl of Worcester's in Vintry Ward; the Earl of Ormond's in Knight Rider Street; the Earl of Arundel's in Tokenhouse Yard. And there was a City mansion which a few years before had been inhabited by that special Duke of Clarence whom schoolboys always associate (sometimes almost enviously) with the famous butt of malmsey. Holborn and Fleet Street were rich in bishops' palaces; and, just outside the City, the Earl of Craven had a mansion in Wych Street—a region of very indecorous reputation in later days. As to the Strand, it became, during this (the sixteenth) century, almost a line of palaces and mansions on the south side, with pleasant gardens extending down to the river. While nobles were thus to so great an extent City Men, in relation to their dwellings, it is no wonder that merchants and traders made their domestic homes at their places of business. The Lord Mayor and aldermen thought not of suburban villas; their wives and daughters were in one part of the City house; their clerks, shopmen, workmen, and apprentices in another. They took

a pleasure-excursion, perhaps, across the fields to Clerkenwell or Islington, but dreamed not of the days when those places, and others far beyond, would be absorbed in London. The main lines of City street were still filled with walkers, horsemen, and litters—not with carriages. When Catherine of Castile came to England to be married to Prince Arthur in 1501, she rode from the Tower to St. Paul's on a pillion behind a nobleman selected by the king, Henry the Seventh; when, some years later, Anne Boleyn rose to her perilous dignity, she rode from the City to Westminster in a horse-litter; and when, many years later still, Queen Elizabeth went into the City, she rode on a pillion behind her Chancellor or Chamberlain. City Men, in Elizabeth's time, not always finding it convenient to meet at their own shops, were wont to assemble in Lombard Street, to make their bargains and contracts; they met at noon and in the evening; but, as Stow tells us, 'Their meetings were unpleasant and troublesome by reason of walking and talking in an open narrow street: being there constrained either to endure all extremities of weather, or else to shelter themselves in shops.' A very extraordinary place for business, at or soon after that time, was the nave of Old St. Paul's Cathedral; and pleasure and rascality, too, as well as business. Dekker says: 'At one time, and in one and the same rank, yea, foot by foot and elbow by elbow, shall you see walking the knight, the gull, the gallant, the upstart, the gentleman, the clown, the captain, the apple squire, the lawyer, the citizen, the bankrupt, the scholar, the doctor, the idiot, the ruffian, the cheater, the Puritan, the cut-throat,' and others whom he queerly groups: 'and thus, while Devotion kneels at her prayers, doth Profanation walk under her nave in contempt of Religion.'

When we pass from the days of the Tudors to those of the Stuarts, we hear of a gradual migration of the nobility westward, leaving the City Men more to themselves. One

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cause of this was, the introduction of coaches. Queen Elizabeth began the innovation; and her wealthy subjects were soon ready to follow it. The coaches were wide, the streets narrow; the coaches either inflicted or suffered much injury; the titled and courtly people therefore gave up their City mansions to merchants and traders, and went to live in the (then) genteel neighbourhood of Covent Garden and Leicester Square. The Thames had long been the favourite highway from east to west, and the boatmen were a numerous and flourishing fraternity; but the coaches, private and hired, now struck at the monopoly. Taylor, the 'Water poet,' in the time of Charles the First, ransacked the language to find words strong enough to express his hatred of them. He called them 'hell-carts.' At one time he would pity the riders, because 'It is a most uneasy kind of passage in coaches on the paved streets of London, wherein men and women are so tossed, tumble'd, jumble'd, and rumble'd,' and where they meet with 'kennels, dunghills, and uneven ways.' At another he expressed a doubt whether 'the devil brought tobacco into England in a coach, or brought a coach in a mist of tobacco.' He told of 'Two leash of oyster-wives who hired a coach to carry them to the Green-goose Fair at Stratford-le-Bow. And as they were hurried betwixt Aldgate and Mile End, they were so be-madam'd, be-mistress'd, and ladyfied by the beggars, that the foolish women began to swell with a proud supposition of imaginary greatness, and gave all their money to the mending canters.' The Londoners had been wont to cross the water by boat to the theatres in Southwark; but now they went by coach over London Bridge; and Taylor expressed his bitter scorn that—

'Fulsome madams and new scurvy squires,
Should jolt the streets in pomp at their desires,
Like great triumphant Tamberlaine each day,
Drawn by the pampered jades of Belgia;
That almost all the streets are blocked out-
right,
Where men can hardly pass from morn till
night,
While watermen wait work.'

The City Men, during the seventeenth century, had a reason of their own for disliking some of the features connected with coaching. The population grew in number, but the streets did not grow in width. There was more of everything, but the thoroughfares could not expand to accommodate the increase—more shops, more stall-keepers, more itinerant dealers (including, after the days of Sir Hugh Myddelton, water-carriers bringing New River water from the several conduits), more waggons and coaches, more horsemen and people. And the state of the best streets was then on a par with that of the worst and poorest at the present day—rugged and filthy. As to the roads in what were then the outskirts of London, they were mere sloughs in winter, scarcely passable by man or beast. There was a waggish theory entertained in those days concerning the long-legged lasses of Sussex—that the length of limb arose from stretching the bone and tendons in the tough pull required to drag the leg out of the mud of that county at every step; and there was a fear lest London legs should elongate from a similar cause.

City Men had thus little either of inducement or facility, in the seventeenth century, for residing far from their places of business. Nor were matters much altered in the eighteenth. In the first place, the streets were desperately infested with profligate characters. Addison, in the 'Spectator,' tells us of the ruffians who called themselves 'Mohawks,' and who were the terror of the streets during the reign of Queen Anne. George the Second's time was not much better; for in 1744 the Lord Mayor went up with an address to the king, praying for better protection of the City streets from brutal outrage. Highway robberies in Hyde Park and May Fair were frequent about the middle of the century; and at different periods in the reigns of the first three Georges the noted highwaymen—Turpin, Bradshaw, Duval, Macheath, Maclean, and the like—were virtually lords over the open places near the metropolis. The proprie-

tors of Ranelagh, Vauxhall, Sadler's Wells, and Belsize Gardens were wont to employ stout resolute fellows to protect the roads in the evening, as a means of guarding visitors to and from those places of amusement, which were in those days far away from town. In the next place the streets were only a little better than in the preceding century, in all that regarded facilities for movement. Kennels ran along the middle of every street; foot-pavements there were none; the roadway, if paved at all, was always rugged and full of hollows; posts and palings alone shielded the foot-passengers from the vehicles; crazy sign-boards swung uneasily overhead; spouts poured down rain-water on the unlucky wayfarers; bulks and shop projections narrowed the already too narrow way; and mobs filled the streets in search of the excitement caused by the pillory, the stocks, executions, and bonfires. Hogarth's pictures are full of such indications of blocked-up streets. London Bridge, the only land artery southward until the opening of Westminster Bridge in 1750, was such an artery as we can now hardly conceive. Lofty houses lined the bridge on both sides, with many ponderous arches overhead to prevent them from falling in; the width of the street-way was only from twelve to twenty feet; it was perilous to vehicles, owing to the lowness of the arches overhead; and foot passengers could only walk in safety by following in the muddy wake of slow-going vehicles. Charging Cross was a mud-pond. The Earl of Tyrconnel, in a speech in the House of Lords in 1741, adverting to the difficulties encountered by members going to and from the house, said: 'The filth of some parts, and the inequality and ruggedness of others, cannot but in the eyes of foreigners disgrace our nation, and incline them to imagine us a people, not only without delicacy, but without government—a herd of barbarians in a colony of Hottentots.' Caroline, queen of George the Second, was often mud-bound till extra help could be obtained, on her way from St. James's Palace to Ken-

sington Palace. Lord Harvey, in the same reign, wrote from Kensington: 'The road between this place and London is grown so infamously bad that we live here in the same solitude as we would do if cast on a rock in the middle of the ocean; and all the Londoners tell us that there is between them and us an impassable gulf of mud.'

During the long reign of George the Third matters mended, slowly but surely. The paving became better; the lighting improved, though the street-lamps were miserable affairs until the days of gas; foot passengers learned to know what flag pavement meant; scavengers became an institution; cobblers' stalls and projecting sheds disappeared a little from the fronts of houses; swinging sign-boards less frequently threatened to fall on the heads of those beneath; and the police obtained a better hold over street ruffians. Nevertheless, the width of street did not increase so rapidly as the number of vehicles; and there was a good deal of thronging and collision. Horace Walpole wrote to Miss Berry in 1791: 'I believe you will think the town cannot hold all the inhabitants, so prodigiously the population is augmented. . . . Indeed, the town is so extended that the breed of chairs is almost lost; for Hercules and Atlas could not carry anybody from one end of the enormous capital to the other.' He probably did not dream how fully his hap-hazard prophecy was to be realized, that 'there will soon be one street from London to Brentford—ay, and from London to every village ten miles round.' Still, it is to be borne in mind that the villages so implied were really villages in those days, too far from the City to constitute convenient residences for City Men.

And this introduces us to one of the chief modern features of London life—the *vehicular*. The hackney coach, the cab, the stage-coach, the omnibus—what have they done, and what are they doing, for City Men? The first coach-stand was established in London about two hundred and thirty years ago; it was near the 'Maypole,' in the Strand. Just two centuries ago

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there were three hundred hackney coaches; and by the lapse of another century their number had increased to nine hundred. They were, from the first, vehicles of a very doubtful character, rickety and creaky in the joints, musty and fusty in the interior, and slow in their movements. Ladies and old folks used them, but they were never largely patronized by City Men. In fact, City Men were plagued by them, for they blocked up the narrow streets in an inconvenient way; moreover, the fare charged was too high to be borne as a daily practice by the average of traders. Two or three years ago, the chiefs of the carriage tax department reported that there was still *one* hackney coach left in London. May its shadow never be less—may it live for ever, and be preserved in some museum as a memorial of the past! The swift-going single-horse cab has risen on the ruins of the old creeping pair-horse coach. It was just about forty years ago that the first cab (*cabriolet de place*, as their Parisian inventors called them) made its appearance in London. There are now more than five thousand of them. Queer-looking things some of them have been—such as the hooded chaise, with the driver sitting on the same seat as his fare; the chaise with the awkward little driver's seat sticking out on the right-hand side; and the slice from an omnibus, with just room for two persons sitting opposite each other, and the driver in front. We have, however, now settled down with the 'four-wheeler,' the most useful of the whole group; and the dashing 'Hansom,' the favourite of fast men, and the terror of women and children at the street crossings. The Jarvey of the old days was an ir reclaimable fellow; the only way to polish him was to improve him off the face of the earth. Cabby is a little better; he is (sometimes) amenable to reason; and one cause of this is that City Men have taken him in hand. Such men, whose time is of much value, spend many a shilling in cabs while permeating the maze of streets in the metropolis; and the drivers, knowing that these customers are not to be trifled

with, are learning to be civil, and to push along as quickly as the throng will let them. It is worthy of remark that no extension of railway and omnibus systems will destroy the usefulness of hired vehicles which may be ordered to any street, and through any route, at the bidding of the fare.

The stage-coach is another British institution which City Men know something about. In fact, the custom of City traders having suburban residences depended very much on the establishment of vehicles which would go and return at certain definite hours of the day. There are old bankers and bankers' clerks still living who remember when there were only two or three stage-coaches running from Paddington to the Bank, making one journey each per day in each direction, at fares of two shillings inside and eighteenpence out. It was only a few years earlier than the time here referred to that the Paddington trade was in the state described by Mr. Smiles in his 'Lives of the Engineers,'—a work that renders engineering almost as pleasant to read as a story: 'Paddington was in the country, and the communication with it was kept up by means of a daily stage—a lumbering vehicle, driven by its proprietor—which was heavily dragged into the City in the morning, down Gray's Inn Lane, with a rest at the "Blue Posts," Holborn Bars, to give passengers an opportunity of doing their shopping. The morning journey was performed in two hours and a half, "quick time," and the return journey in the evening in about three hours.' But better days were coming. By degrees, stage-coaches a little more rapid in movement became numerous, and most of the villages around the metropolis could boast of one or more of them. Quiet and cliquish affairs they were. On their journey up to town in the morning, the same City Men occupied the same seats day after day, and had the same kind of familiar chat with the same coachman. The insiders, paying a little higher fare, were more deferentially treated than the outsiders; and the driver would sometimes wait awhile to enable these

grand people to finish their breakfast and don their overcoats.

City Men first used omnibuses a little more than thirty years ago. Poor Shillibeer must rank with many other inventors who have drained their own pockets in schemes which eventually benefited the public. He put on an omnibus (people did not till long afterwards indulge in the pert abbreviation 'bus') from Greenwich to Charing Cross, and then another from Paddington to the Bank. How the stage-coachmen jeered him! How they 'nursed' him, threatened him, opposed him, obstructed his horses, injured his vehicle! He could not stand it; he withdrew from the contest, but not before the public had shown unmistakably that they preferred omnibuses to stage-coaches. The stage masters took the hint, and became 'bus' masters. Year by year did the number increase, as well as the routes which they followed; and now that they are fifteen or sixteen hundred strong, it requires a City Man to understand them all. *Punch* informs us that old women (of both sexes) are sometimes driven from Regent Circus to Chelsea as the nearest way to the Bank; and those who are not old women have sufficient difficulty in discriminating between the various groups of omnibuses. But City Men are seldom deceived in these matters; it is a part of their daily duty to know exactly where and when such and such 'buses' pass, for the knowledge saves time, and time is money. It is quite a sight to be near the Bank from nine to eleven in the morning, and from four to six in the evening. This wonderful heart draws in the commercial blood from every parish or hamlet, village or town, within ten miles' distance; and six or eight hours afterwards it sends forth the same blood through the same channels to the same places.

City Men also know what river traffic means. The steamers bring them to London Bridge every few minutes, and at very trifling charges. Kew, Hammersmith, and Putney, Wandsworth, Battersea, and Chelsea, Pimlico, Vauxhall, and Westminster—all pour out their living streams

on the 'silent highway.' And so likewise do a multitude of places on the banks of the river below bridge—Gravesend, Greenhithe, Erith, Purfleet, Woolwich, Greenwich, &c. To see the steamers at the northern foot of London Bridge is almost as great a sight in its way as that of the omnibuses at the Bank. How the people press on, along the narrow gangway, over the dumb-lighter, up steps—a jam of humanity!

But who is to count the number of City Men who now come into town in the morning by rail, and the various arteries through which they flow? Dominie Sampson's exclamation is the only one applicable here. Let us see. The Eastern Counties Station in Shoreditch is not a loveable spot, nor is the Blackwall in Fenchurch Street much better; yet have they taught us to regard Essex as a suburb of London. A steam-boat rapidly crosses the Thames from the great arsenal, and then the North Woolwich train starts; gathering up its people from different points on either side of the strange river Lea, it deposits its living burden at Shoreditch or Fenchurch Street, as the case may be, there leaving them to ramify throughout the City. Another steam-boat rapidly crosses the Thames from Gravesend, and then the Tilbury train starts; drawing in City Men and other men from Grays and Purfleet, from Rainham and Barking, from East Ham and West Ham, from Plaistow and Bromley, the train brings its stream to the great London vortex. Nay, even Southend claims to be a suburb of the metropolis; for one of the commercial magnates of the day—Sir Morton Peto—has built a bran new Clifton, or Clifftown, near it; and to induce Londoners to take these houses as family residences, he offers to bring the husbands up to business by rail every morning for something like sixpence per journey, and in something like an hour and a quarter, despite the distance of forty-four miles. He asserts that Paterfamilias will find it cheaper in the end to do this than to live in town, because wife and children will thereby patronize sea-air in-

stead of doctors. Then the Eastern Counties proper (sometimes improper) brings up its Barking and Ilford people, and the folks of Stratford and Bow—but, truth to tell, this is not a good City Man's line. A better is the Epping railway, which, though not springing from quite so great a distance as the traditional land of pork sausages, does nevertheless gather all the City Men from their smuggeries in and around Epping Forest and Woodford and Wanstead, and deposit them sometimes in the morning at Shoreditch or Fenchurch Street. Then the Cambridge line begins its cheap trains at the stations near the source of the New River, about Ware and St. Margaret's, and clears the country of its City Men from all the parts round about Waltham Abbey, Cheshunt, Enfield, Edmonton, Tottenham, and Lea Bridge.

Turning from the east to the north, and watching the two great stations which stand jealously near each other, at King's Cross and Euston Square, we find this fact made evident—that the companies owning the long lines do not much care for suburban traffic. Still, they help to fill the great metropolitan reservoir every morning. The one, starting its City Men's trains from about Welwyn, picks up from Linton and Hertford, from Hatfield and Barnet, from Southgate, and Hornsey, and Holloway, and pours out the passengers at King's Cross. The other, beginning its short trains (say) at St. Albans or Boxmoor, finds that Watford and Bushey, Pinner and Harrow, Sudbury and Willesden, do their little best towards filling London every morning. Another vast concern, similarly struggling for the northern as well as many other kinds of long traffic, would know more about City Men if its terminus were not so far distant. The Great Western is of course the railway here implied. The regal Windsor, and many pleasant spots around it, together with the angler's pet places about Cookham and Maidenhead, and Uxbridge and Hanwell and Ealing, all help to swell the stream; but then it is hard work to get from

the Paddington Station to the busy haunts.

What must we say, however, what *can* we say, of the roundabout line which deserves the name of the East West North [Central Junction Continuation Railway? Not only does it carry a prodigious number of City Men to and fro between their homes and their places of business, but it seems ready to carry anybody anywhere. No sooner is a train started, than it stops, puts out three or four dozen passengers, takes in an equal number, and off again; stops again in three minutes, exchanges its dozens or scores, and again off; again stops in three or four minutes, and so on, over and over again. Its 'mission' seems to be to set all the northern suburbs into a ferment from eight in the morning till eleven in the evening. Every quarter of an hour throughout the livelong day, in both directions, are long trains engaged in this hurly-burly. Hampstead Road begins it; Camden Town keeps it up; Caledonian Road and Islington continue it; Stoke Newington and Kingsland do their part; Hackney and Victoria Park will not be forgotten; and so, after including Bow and Stepney, out pours the flood of people finally into the City. This is the busy half, but it is not the only one; for, by a most wonderful dispensation of engineers, Twickenham has been united with Fenchurch Street by way of Hampstead! Quietly going nearly eastward, over the Thames from Twickenham to Richmond, and thence to Mortlake and Barnes, the line suffers a painfully-sudden angular shoot towards the north-west, which carries it past Chiswick to Brentford. Here another dislocating twist turns it to the north-east towards Acton, where it receives a Hammersmith tributary in some mysterious way; it works past the Edgware and Finchley Roads to Hampstead, where a tunnel allows it to find its way into low ground; and then, taking a resolute southerly bend, it proceeds to Kentish Town and to the North London line at Camden Town. It is an amazing affair, a sort of distorted figure of 8 thrown on its face; yet it appears to

have its merits, for City Men *do* work their way from Twickenham and Richmond by its means.

But the southern railways are far more remarkable than the northern as City Men's lines. One reason for this is, that Surrey and Kent are beautiful counties for suburban villas. The South-Western brings to Waterloo Station large numbers of morning passengers, who, if not all City Men, are business men belonging to the same general class. There is the Windsor line, accommodating also Datchet and Egham, Virginia Water and Staines; there is the 'loop-line,' as they call it, sweeping into its grasp all the City Men from Hounslow, Isleworth, Brentford, Kew, and Chiswick; there is the Richmond line, serving Mortlake, Barnes, and Putney; and there are other lines, by which Hampton Court, Kingston, Epsom, Morden, Mitcham, Wimbledon, and Wandsworth pour forth their morning passengers to Waterloo Bridge. This station is, however, not to be compared with the extensive group at London Bridge, where four companies have melted into two, which divide between them an immense station, now too small even in its immensity. Three or four years ago the South-Western were justified in boasting that *four million* passengers went to or from their Waterloo Station yearly; but then the group of north and east suburbs contributed *eleven* millions to the Fenchurch Station; and the southern counties *fourteen* millions to that at London Bridge! The Brighton Company, by possessing the Croydon and Epsom Railway, and also the branch past the Crystal Palace to Pimlico, have made Epsom, Ewell, Cheam, Sutton, Carshalton, Croydon, Norwood, Streatham, Sydenham, and Forest Hill virtually suburbs of London. Nay, Brighton is so likewise; for a morning express brings up its City Men to London Bridge in an hour and a quarter—inasmuch that Brighton has become London-*super-Mare*. The South-Eastern probably beats even the Brighton as a City Men's line. If we trace on a map, or in Bradshaw, the Greenwich branch, the Mid Kent branch, and the

North Kent branch as far as Gravesend, we shall find about twenty stations, every one of which is the centre of a district that pours forth its City Men in the morning. Country hamlets have become towns of villas; pleasant residential spots appear where fields and woods used a few years ago to reign in their loneliness—and all owing to the Railways.

There is no mistaking City Men at the London Bridge Station. Something in or upon them, something round or about them, marks them off as a special class. They are not to be confounded with the suburban people who come to London for pleasure, or to purchase goods for their suburban shops. Whether from the Greenwich line, or the North Kent, or the Mid Kent—whether from the Norwood and Streatham, or the Croydon and Epsom, it is all the same: the City Men are *sui generis*. They pour out of different doorways and gateways, walk determinedly on at a smart pace, descend by the sloping road to the clock-tower, disregard the cabs and buses, and so get upon the bridge. This is a fine place to see them. When the great fire at Cotton's Wharf occurred in June last, the City Men just glanced round at it as they came over the bridge; but it was only a glance, for they could not stop to stare. Whether with overcoats or Inverness capes, wrappers or mackintoshes, the City Men on the bridge are to be detected from the other wayfarers. Leggings, knickerbockers, sticks, umbrellas, small black bags (City Men have discarded carpet-bags), all may be seen worn or carried by the passengers passing over the bridge; yet even these do not disturb the special identity. Not so much in the things themselves, as in the way in which they are borne along, is the distinction maintained. The City Men—going to Mark Lane to attend to matters of corn and flour, to Mincing Lane for grocery and spice dealings, to the wine region around Trinity Square, to the foreign merchants' region in Winchester Street and Austin Friars, to the banking region of Lombard Street,

to the shipping region at the docks and wharfs, to the black diamond region at the Coal Exchange, to the speculative region around Capel Court, to the textile goods region about Cheapside and Cannon Street—they all cross London Bridge with an air and manner not to be misunderstood. The junior clerks and assistants are early; they may be seen by eight o'clock or so, in small numbers. Generally the mightier men are the later; but whether of ten thousand a year or of fifty pounds, they throng more thickly towards nine, and still more so towards the hour of ten. Every man has a watch which is tolerably reliable; but every man glances up at the clock as he passes, just to verify his own timekeeper. No one is ever too early at his office or counting-house; each generally cuts it pretty closely in meteing out his time; hence there is no lingering on the way from the station. On the arrival-platform itself the bustle is so great that none but the initiated can tell City Men from other men; every one is scrambling past every one else; everybody wants to get out first; railway porters jostle and are jostled; if any cab-people are among them, they have to reach their cabs under difficulties; and quick-sighted quiet police, in plain dress or blue dress, are watchful as to the presence of any of those queer characters who sometimes look out for prey at these places. When, however, the flood is poured out into the open air, and reaches the bridge, then do the City Men show their force—separated by an undefinable personality from west-end people, country people, and leisuely people. The little black bag which some carry may contain professional or business papers, or a few articles of clean linen for special occasions, or perchance something in a sandwich-case or a sherry-flask for luncheon—we know not; but the bag has something about it which seems to say, 'I am a City Man's bag.'

There are some remarkable facilities yet in store for City Men, in reference to their means of going to and returning from business. The Metropolitan Railway promises to do

much for them. At present we know of it only as a nuisance. We have seen Marylebone and St. Pancras churches on the verge of gaping precipices, Hampstead and Tottenham Court Roads in a whirl of confusion, King's Cross blocked up for months together, omnibus drivers hovering between despair and cursing, and Coppice Row really in a dangerous state for the ill-used inhabitants. All may, perhaps, be bright again after a time; and then, if promises should be fulfilled, the City Men from the Great Western region will plunge into the underground railway at Paddington for Farringdon Street, and from the Great Northern region at King's Cross. Then, when the Chatham and Dover Company's operations are finished, another stream will be brought to the same Farringdon Street Station from Kent and Surrey, depositing the City Men from their Cray, and Bromley, and Sydenham, and Dulwich, and Camberwell homes at a spot within two or three furlongs of St. Paul's.

Out of evil comes good. The South-Eastern Company has been hard-pressed by the Chatham line, but the pressure has been bravely borne. There is no calculating the flood of traffic that will pass over this Company's metropolitan lines by-and-by. An extension is being made from the London Bridge Station to Charing Cross, accommodating on its way the Borough Road, Blackfriars Road, and Waterloo Road, and uniting with the South-Western terminus at Waterloo. Then there will be another extension to Cannon Street, within two or three hundred yards of the Mansion House, the Bank, the Exchange, and the very heart of City business. The station hereabouts will be a good reminder of days long gone by, and of the contrast between the past and the present; for it will be close to that famous old London Stone which sixteen centuries ago served as a *milliarium*, or central milestone, from which all the Roman roads out of London were measured. Two entirely new and distinct bridges will be built across the Thames for these purposes. What prodigious

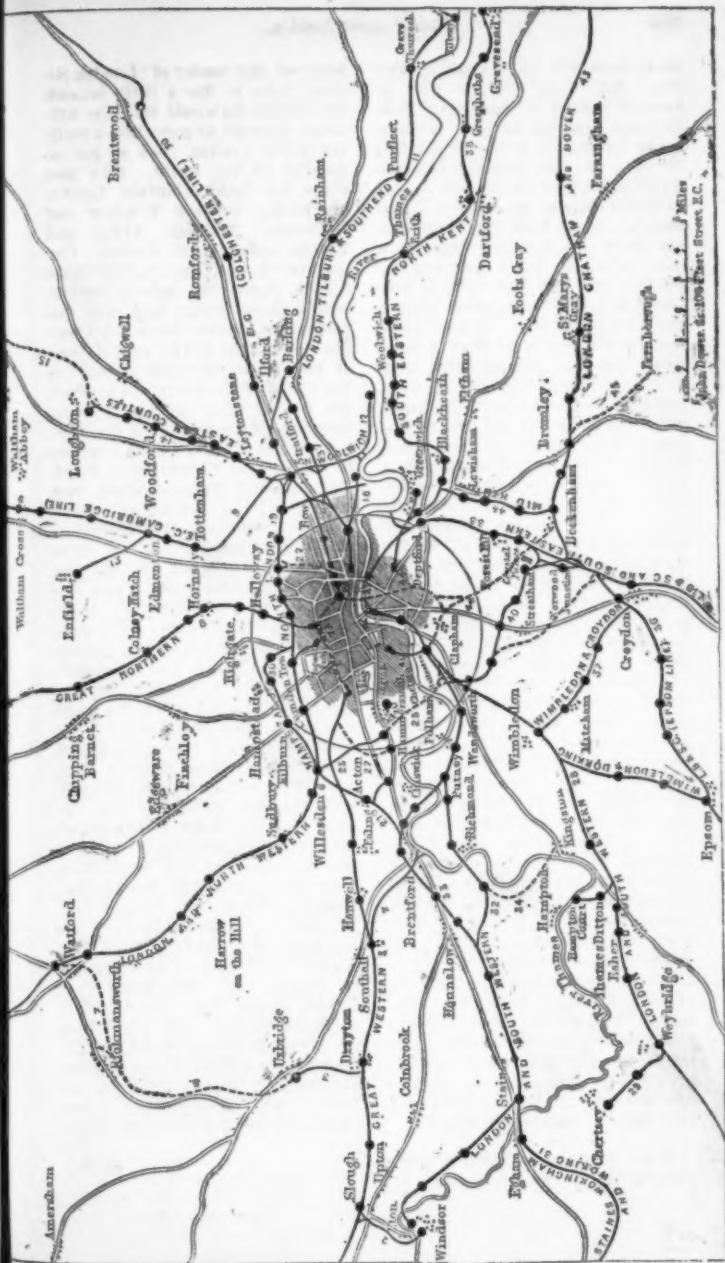
trade there will be! The City Men from Kent and Surrey will be brought almost to the doors of their business establishments, without being hustled on foot over London Bridge. No less than *two thousand omnibus-loads* of people now ascend or alight daily at the London Bridge station; or at least the omnibuses are there one thousand times in a day, whether laden partially or wholly; and City Men have to bear the difficulty of struggling against them on the bridge. Again: there are considerably more than a hundred thousand persons who cross London Bridge every day on foot; and on a bright Monday in summer, when excursionists and Crystal Palace visitors muster in great force, the number is swelled to a hundred and fifty thousand—to the discomfort of City Men, who desire to cover the distance between the station and their place of business in as few minutes as possible. Cannon Street will have something to say to this in a year or two. And then Cannon Street will also have its twopenny or threepenny railway ride to Charing Cross. Again: the business men of the West End—the thousands of clerks in the various government offices, and the thousands of well-to-do shopkeepers—will be brought from their suburban residences to the best possible spot for a station in the western half of the metropolis. We can fancy, too, the glories of Charing Cross Station on an Easter Monday, or Whit Monday, when holiday faces shine with glee; but it is business men only that are here talked about. The heart of City trade will continue to beat just where it now is for untold ages to come, unless reasonable prophecy be falsified by some agencies equally untold; and as the City really cannot give home-accommodation to the traders, even if they were disposed to accept it, the traders must e'en come into the City in the morning, and their transit must be provided for.

Note. The above sketch is complete for the purpose intended. If

however, any reader of 'London Society' were to dip a little beneath the surface, he would find the suburban railways to constitute a really wonderful system, such as has no parallel in the world. City men claim for *their* suburban London everything between Windsor and Gravesend, Waltham Abbey and Epsom, and even still further. Our map has no less than 170 little black dots to denote the railway stations within those limits; and even this prodigious number leaves a few near the centre unmarked for want of space. It may be worth while to mention the names of the companies to which the several lines belong, with reference to the numerals on the map:—1. *Great Western*; with branches to Windsor (2), Uxbridge (3), Brentford (4), and Rickmansworth, now making (5). 6. *London and North-Western*; with branch to Rickmansworth, now making (7). 8. *Great Northern*. 9. *Eastern Counties*; including Colchester line (10), and branches to Southend (11), North Woolwich (12), Enfield (13), Loughton (14), and Epping, now making (15). 16. *London and Blackwall*; with branches to Barking (17), and Bow (18). 19. *North London*; with the Hampstead Junction (20), the Kew Extension (21), and the branch to Finsbury, now making (22). 23. *Metropolitan* (underground); with Finsbury Extension (24). 25. *West London*; with a (proposed) branch to Brompton (26). 27. *Hammermith Junction*. 28. *South-Western*; with branches to Chertsey (29), Hampton Court (30), Epsom (31), Windsor (32), Hounslow (33), and Kingston, now making (34). 35. *London and Brighton*; with branches to Epsom (36), Wimbledon (37), Crystal Palace (40), Pimlico (41). 35. *South-Eastern*; with North Kent (38), Greenwich (39), Mid Kent (46), Charing Cross and Cannon Street Extension (47). 43. *Chatham and Dover*; with Metropolitan extensions (44), and Farnborough branch (45).

G. D.

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ROUND ABOUT LONDON:—CITY MEN'S RAILWAYS.

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THE HOUSE IN PICCADILLY.

A TALE FOR MAIDENS, WIVES, AND WIDOWS; AND, INCIDENTALLY,
FOR ELDERLY GENTLEMEN.

CHAPTER VI.

'A SYMPATHIZING HEART.'

'WHERE is Floy, Gussie?'

Mrs. Knightly asked the question of her eldest daughter, as that young lady entered the room, still equipped in habit and hat, where the comely widow sat in luxurious idleness.

'Gone to her own room, mamma, and Gerald has ridden off straight to Woolwich: he sent a good-bye to you by me, for he had no time to come in.'

Augusta stood looking absently out of the window. She had something to say, and she was not clear as to how she would say it. The knowledge that Gussie had something to communicate had dawned upon Mrs. Knightly from Gussie's manner; therefore she too felt uncomfortable.

'Whom have you seen this morning, Gussie?'

'Oh, several people.'

'Why don't you go and take off your things? I want you to go out in the carriage with me; I want to go into Regent Street.'

'Dear mamma,' began Augusta, turning round suddenly and facing her mother—a proceeding which made that good lady feel herself guilty of meanness, somehow or other, in having listened to anything against any one who was dear to Augusta; 'dear mamma, I will get ready to go with you anywhere, after you have answered me a question. Is my marriage to take place, as was arranged, in August?'

'What do you mean, Augusta?'

Mrs. Knightly always would try to gain time before she answered a straightforward question by asking another.

'Will you take measures—in fact, will you give me the fortune papa always promised me?'

Mrs. Knightly always had tears at command; three large ones rolled down each cheek.

VOL. I.—NO. IV.

'I have had a great deal to annoy me this morning, Gussie—a very great deal; don't ask me about such matters now; I don't feel strong enough to bear it; still, since you have spoken on the subject, I must say—No: not to marry Frank Tollemache with it and dissipate it in a worthless manner.'

'What do you mean, mamma?'

Augusta sat down now and faced her mother; 'I very rarely understand you,—now less than ever; for you could not mean that I am not to marry Frank Tollemache; and you could not mean to apply the epithet worthless to anything in connection with him—or me. What did you mean?'

'Exactly what I said,' replied Mrs. Knightly, angrily, 'that I'll not give you a fortune—it's mine to give, remember,—to waste, yes, waste, on such a worth—on a man who has boasted that he's going to right himself and get out of his disgraceful difficulties by marrying you. I hope you understand me now.'

'This is your final answer, mother? You will tell me your authority for these libels about Frank?'

'Yes, it is—, and no, I won't go betraying a confidence. I hope you understand that, though you do so rarely know what I mean.'

'Yes, I quite understand you, mamma,' said Augusta, quietly; and then rising she went to her own room.

Augusta was not a woman to attempt to melt a person's harsh resolve by tears; she had a deeply-rooted objection to public weepings; at the same time she was very far from being a hard woman. Florence shortly afterwards wandering restlessly into her sister's room found Augusta just rising from her writ-

ing-table whereon lay a note addressed to Sir Francis Tollemache, with pale cheeks and red rings round her eyes.

'Gussie, dear! what is the matter?' she asked anxiously, throwing her arms fondly round her sister's neck; and then Augusta, who was not a bit of a heroine when there was no occasion for it, burst out crying afresh; and after binding Floy down not to say a word to mamma nor to Baines, poured her sorrow into her sister's sympathetic ears.

'What a rage Rupert will be in, Gussie! he's so fond of Frank; do ask him to speak to mamma.'

'Has mamma shown herself so anxious to serve Rupert, Floy, that we could reasonably hope for his speaking to be of any use? Now let me bathe my eyes, for I'm going out with her, and I shouldn't like her to see that I had been crying.'

She did not look like a Niobe as she swept down the stairs and through the hall after her mother. Still less did she look like one as she took her place in the open carriage—one of those sloping carriages in which it is almost impossible for a woman to be anything but graceful—and shook out her voluminous skirts into soft, easy lines and folds. Some peculiar golden-lined flowers, which rested under the brim of her white bonnet at the top, and merged away into nearly white at the sides where they came in contact with her face, prevented the pallor of her cheeks from being conspicuously apparent; and a hazy veil concealed the redness of her eyes. She gave her mind to some silks at Swan and Edgar's in a way that enchanted her mother—for whom they were—and was so politely attentive to her mother's rather weakly nothings, that on their way home after a happy hour of shopping, out of the fullness of her heart that lady spoke:

'I am very much pleased with the way you take it, my dear; you're sure to do much better; and if you'll follow my advice, you'll at once send back whatever presents he may have made you.'

Augusta kept her head turned

away while her mother was speaking, and for a minute or two after. When she did turn it round she brought on it the smile with which she had just greeted some acquaintance who had passed. She did not answer in words then—or at all—but that day at dinner her beautiful little hands were almost covered with rings—with rings that Frank had given her, as Mrs. Knightly angrily perceived.

Miss Knightly was not one to regard herself as an advertising medium or moveable placard; therefore she did not feel called upon to rush about and inform every person with whom she had ever held friendly communion, that the engagement between Frank and herself was broken off, or at the best indefinitely postponed. But it was a kind of thing that despite her haughty reticence, would get talked about. And one morning when Rupert, after spending an hour or two in Tollemache's rooms, said to him in a laboriously impromptu manner, 'If I were in your place, my dear fellow, I'd get out of this for a time—it's what I should have done myself if Georgie's father hadn't behaved so handsomely; couldn't you go abroad? you needn't fear to leave her; Gussie will be true as steel to you.' When Rupert said this Frank Tollemache knew that the brother and sister had talked it over, and that the suggestion that he should go away had been made by the lady to spare him possible mortification. And so with a faint but clinging reliance on that last feeble straw, time, which unhappy people so providentially hope is going to do much for them, Frank Tollemache and Augusta resolved to separate, until the mother's heart should be in the right place again.

Mrs. Vining had one of those dangerous little dinners which young married women will so recklessly persist in giving, regardless of consequences. Georgie Clifford was there, of course, and Rupert Knightly. They were a safe pair enough, for their wedding-day was settled; it was not to them that this dinner was dangerous. Nor was it so to Augusta and Frank Tolle-

macho, who, as he expressed it, was there for a farewell feed, previous to starting off to the Continent for a time. No; to them it was a tedious, distracting affair this elegantly-arranged little dinner. This spotless table, with its delicate white service and dazzling glass and silver, warmed and lighted up with red wax candles, seemed a mockery of the grief—the sad, helpless grief that was filling both their hearts. It was to radiant Florence—radiant though in simple white muslin, with an innocent row of pearls round her even fairer throat—that this social little meeting was dangerous, for Colonel Crofton was there; and the keen, polished man was ever keener and more polished at Harry Vining's table than anywhere else. He was a favourite of the hostess, too, and that always gives a man immense advantages.

He had been a frequent visitor at the Knightlys' house of late; and Florence could never sufficiently admire the refined tact which made him—though of course devoted to her—persistently endeavour to ingratiate himself with her mother—with her rich mother, on whom, as had been proved in poor Gussie's case, everything depended. Mamma cannot fail to like him, she thought, and if my wealth may be the means of his being enabled to marry me, how right he is to try and please her so as to insure it. Florence liked him too well to pause and consider how very unheroic such a proceeding was on the part of this idol of hers. He did not say much to her individually, whilst they were seated at table, for the party was too small for the conversation to be anything but general. And Rupert did no small service to Colonel Crofton's cause in the heart of Florence, by talking to him a great deal, and giving him the opportunity of saying a great quantity of clever nonsense, in order to cover Augusta's sadness and Frank's silence.

But when they had all reassembled in the pretty amber-coloured drawing-room, the party was not one in which conversation was likely to be general. Rupert and Georgie were

in such a happy, tolerant state, that they would have talked to any one who would have listened to them; but only Mr. and Mrs. Vining were inclined to listen to them. Miss Knightly had seated herself in the back drawing-room, which was faintly and softly lighted; and Frank stood by her side, leaning over the back of a high chair, and they were speaking in low whispers. And Florence, sitting at the piano, played little dreamy pieces, that did not disturb the melodious flow of words which Colonel Crofton, sitting by her side, poured into her ear.

'We have not been to Greenwich once this season,' they heard Mrs. Vining say to Georgie, after a time.

'Would you like to go?' said Colonel Crofton in a low tone to Florence. 'If you would, in a short time I could make one of your party; but it must not be just yet, as I am bound for every evening for some time to come.'

He wanted Georgie Clifford to be off and away before that excursion came to pass.

'I should like to wait until you can go with us,' Florence answered with a warm blush; 'but you see we are dependent in a measure on Mrs. Vining.'

'Nonsense, excuse me, but if that is all, I will undertake to persuade Mrs. Knightly to go, and then you can fix your own time. Perhaps we had better not say anything about it until your brother is married. Gerald will meet us there, no doubt, and we'll have a delightful family party.'

He said the words designedly; and for many days—till the Greenwich day was among the things of the past indeed—they were meat and drink to Florence; and her eyes at once told him that they were so.

'Dearest, dearest! then your silence means that you wish my suit with your mother success,' he said, bending down and lightly touching her hand for one moment, as he affected to turn a page for her. Florence, lowering her golden head to avoid his too earnest gaze, made a short speech, but one that was very much to the purpose.

'Yes;' and then as she dashed off

a difficult piece, felt rather ashamed of herself for being so very happy, when poor Gussie's heartstrings were being so strained at. She could almost have laughed (she said this to herself, though in truth she could have hit Georgie with pleasure), when Miss Clifford, on saying good night to Colonel Crofton as they all stood cloaked and hooded in the hall, remarked that he looked almost as sentimental as he had done on the last occasion of her having met him there. It was very spiteful of Georgie, she thought, to refer to his passing admiration for herself in that way; for of course it was only that. She could almost have wished, too, that he had chosen other words for his answer than,

'And I cannot plead a fairer cause, Miss Clifford.'

But, altogether, she went home very happy indeed, and understood perfectly now why people liked dinner parties.

She did not condole with Gussie—she did not, indeed, remember that Gussie stood in need of sympathy and condolence—until she had removed the filmy muslin and pearls and ordered her maid away. Then she flung on a white dressing-gown, and ran to Gussie's door.

'May I come in, Gussie? Do let me.' On her sister admitting her, she proceeded to explain how sorry she was that she had forgotten to say good-bye more particularly to Frank, who was going the next day; and as Augusta acquitted her of all blame, and rather absently accepted her excuses, she went off into a discursive canter through the wide field of Colonel Crofton's merits, and was brought up at last by Augusta saying languidly, and in a manner that clearly proved she had not been listening to a word Florence had been uttering—

'Whom are you talking about, Floy? Colonel Crofton? Oh, I hate the man; he's so deceitful.'

Floy had to make great allowances for Gussie's state of mind in order to curb her wrath; she said good night to her sister rather coldly, and went off to a happy solitude.

Though Frank is going away, and though he was stupid enough to

lame a horse that had once belonged to Colonel Crofton, Gussie needn't have said that, was her thought as she stood before her mirror brushing out her bright hair; but when they come to know him better they'll all do him justice, I'm sure. How I hope mamma will like him!

'And where do Rupert and you mean to live, dear?' asked Mrs. Knightly of her future daughter-in-law, as she was preparing to leave the room in Lord Clifford's house which had been devoted for some days to the reception of all the new dresses for the great occasion. Gussie and Floy had been with Georgie all day deciding the question of what the bridesmaids should appear in; and Mrs. Knightly had just driven over to fetch them according to agreement, and to inspect preparations as far as they had gone.

'Where do Rupert and you mean to live, dear?'

'Well, Mrs. Knightly, I've rather wondered that you haven't asked that question before. Where should you think would be the most proper place?'

Georgie was on her knees before an artificial flower box, and she dropped a wreath into it as she spoke, and looked up straight into Mrs. Knightly's face.

Mrs. Knightly, aided by her conscience, read in Georgie's eyes, 'Don't you think the house in Piccadilly, where you have stationed yourself, would be the most proper place for Rupert Knightly, Esq., and his bride to take up their abode?' and the reading displeased her.

'I don't know, I'm sure,' she answered, rather shortly. 'If I had been consulted, which I haven't been, I might have an opinion to offer; as it is, I have none.'

Georgie, sweet and dear as she was, rose freely if the least slight was put upon her; the laughing light went out of her eyes in a moment, therefore, as she stood up suddenly before Mrs. Knightly and answered—

'Consulted you! Considering that my father has settled house, lands, everything that he has upon dear Rupert, there was small occasion for

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THE BALCONY AT THE "TRAFALGAR."

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CHAPTER VII

THE MORNING IS ALL OVER. THE MORNING
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THE BALCONY AT THE "TRINIDAD"

us to consult you about our future residence. We shall live here, Mrs. Knightly, here, in this house, which will be Rupert's on the day he marries me.'

'And very kind it is of Lord Clifford, I'm sure,' said Mrs. Knightly blandly, for Georgie had frightened her a little; 'but not more than any parent would do for a child. Your papa isn't in, is he, dear? or I'd go and tell him how pleased I am; we're kindred spirits in fact. I always used to say to dear Mr. Knightly, fathers can't do too much for their children.'

'They cannot, indeed, Mrs. Knightly,' replied Georgie; 'for we know, don't we, that the children very frequently go to the wall when their fathers no longer live to take care of them? No; papa is not at home; it's a great pity, as he would, of course, be happier if he knew that you approved so heartily of what he has done; however I will be sure to tell him.'

'My dear,' she said afterwards, in talking to Gussie about it, 'papa was in his study the whole time, but something about the Channel fleet, or iron-clad ships, or manning the navy, that he'd seen in the "Times" that morning, had put him out dreadfully, and if your mamma had gone obtusely congratulating him and herself on being kindred spirits, I really believe he would have blown her up, as he calls it; and, Gussie, I'm not sure that it would not have served her right. She sympathize with papa, indeed! Nonsense.'

CHAPTER VII.

MRS. KNIGHTLY PARTAKEN OF WHITE-BAIT AND OTHER DELICACIES.

There was a fiery heat in the air, and the languid wind, when it could be caught, warmed more than it refreshed. The heat came throbbing down in fierce waves upon the heads of all who had rashly ventured out from beneath the sheltering roof. It was the day of all others to make thoughts of Greenwich, of dining by the river, acceptable; and fortunately it was the very day selected by

Mrs. Knightly for that excursion which had been first spoken of at Mrs. Vining's dangerous little dinner.

Colonel Crofton had been the moving spring of everything. He had made himself invaluable. The day had been suggested by him, though I have said Mrs. Knightly selected it; so she did, nominally, but Colonel Crofton had instructed her, although she was scarcely aware of it. He had himself indited the directions to Mr. Hart which made the latter determine to excel himself, and give them the room with the large balcony facing the Royal Hospital, as the river was not quite all that could have been wished. Colonel Crofton had graciously allowed the Vinings to be asked to join them, because he wanted Harry to drive him down, and because Mrs. Vining, an unconscious ally, might be useful to him while they were there. But with the exception of the Vinings (and himself, he observed parenthetically) the party was strictly a family one.

Rupert was married. Georgie was Mrs. Knightly now; and they were away in Paris with Frank Tolle-mache, who had only been too glad to join Gussie's pet brother—to the great relief of Colonel Crofton. He could not depend upon himself to do a decidedly base and mean thing immediately under Georgie's eyes. So the party was not a large one—Mrs. Knightly, her two daughters, Gerald, the Vinings, and himself.

The Knightlys reached the Trafalgar first; for the Knightly horses were fleet and strong; besides, Mrs. Vining was rarely ready at the appointed time; therefore the graceful britzka had drawn up, to the admiration of numbers of old pensioners and small boys, some time before there appeared the dashing mail phaeton in which Colonel Crofton came, but did not mean to return. Three prettier women had never stood upon that balcony, which has held so many pretty women, than the three—the mother and her daughters—who stood there under that summer sun, waiting the arrival of the mail phaeton. Mrs. Knightly's were autumnal charms, or rather Indian-summer—second summer charms.

She was a woman who united a fragile appearance and tender, delicate tints, with the most perfect health and the hardest of constitutions. There is an old Eastern Counties phrase that is often used with reference to people who preserve an appearance of health, who hang out flags of salubrity in their cheeks, when they are, in truth, far from being robust: 'He is ill,' they say, 'but his looks don't pity him.' Now Mrs. Knightly's looks did pity her immensely. This hysterical, delicate woman, who had kept up a running account with a doctor from the time she was sixteen—which fact alone proves her strength—was in reality very tough indeed. Hers was the class of beauty that ill-health would have utterly destroyed; a headache would have diminished her bloom in half an hour, and a serious indisposition have ruined it for ever. But she never had either one or the other; and in this her second summer the rose bloomed brightly as of yore.

She had nearly left off shamming mourning now—this idolized wife, upon whom had been heaped by her dead husband every imaginable mark of love and confidence. Silvery grey predominated, to be sure. Her dress was a cloud—a cloud with fourteen small flounces on it, and her gloves were of the same hue; but the bonnet of black Maltese lace, to match the shawl which she wore like a Frenchwoman, had a crimson rose like a cockade on the outside of the brim to the left, and youthful buds of the same clustering upon her soft dusky hair. And the cameo brooch, and the bunch of charms, and the jewelled buckle which clasped her waist rather tightly—none of these looked like mourning.

They looked, however, as much like it as her face did; as her bright eyes, and softly smiling mouth, and dimpling cheeks. She had come there last to eat whitebait with the father of her children—with the husband, who was dead and—nearly forgotten. And now, before the last word had been chiselled on the elaborate monument she had ordered to be raised to him, while he was fresh in the memory of a little

French poodle, who still would wait patiently and faithfully for hours at the door of the room from which his master would never again come forth,—she, the widow, was on the alert to catch the faintest sound of the wheels which were bearing towards her another man; and—alas for the daughter!—Florence's ears were strained to catch the same sound.

Augusta, who had not cared very much how she looked, and Florence, who had cared very much indeed, had for once dressed alike. They had put on blue grenadines, covered with wonderful puffings, and pretty white hats with drooping white feathers, and bands of black velvet round them.

Gerald from Woolwich, and the Vinings and Colonel Crofton from London, arrived at the same time; and then, as it was too early to dine, they decided to go into the Hospital and see the well-worn lions there.

Putting out of the question the Chapel, which is a gem, and the Painted Hall, which, in spite of its beauty, is a trial to every one who cares about pictures, the light being so ingeniously contrived, that, stand where you will, it does not fall upon a single painting; and the Charles's Ward, and the long, wonderfully clean dining-rooms, and the glass model of the battle of Trafalgar, where all the ships are blazing away fiercely in cotton-wool; putting all these, together with the beauty of form of the building as a whole, out of the question, the colour of it alone is worth going any distance to see it. The whole of the two blocks that face the river is of the uniform Danish crow tint—a deep, time-painted grey. It was in one of these blocks that Nell Gwynne had a suite of apartments; and here, so lately as 1853-4, might still be seen hanging from the wall the faded drapery which had once fluttered over her couch. Time's changes—how wonderful they are! This same room has seen many of them, from the day the foundress of the St. Alban's family rested there, when Charles held court at Greenwich, up to the present time, when it is the drawing-room of one of the private families residing there.

It was too hot on this especial July evening to stand outside on those bright yellow paths between the velvet-like plots of grass and admire the colour of the building. As Colonel Crofton suggested, they could do that more comfortably from the Trafalgar balcony after dinner, when it was cool. So they went into the Painted Hall; and while Florence stood at the outer end, making a rapid sketch of the head of Vasco da Gama, and the others wandered about trying to make out what it was all about on the coiling, Colonel Crofton and Mrs. Knightly went on into that little room at the top, where florid angels with stout wings are bearing aloft a gashed and pallid Nelson. When they came out and joined the rest of the party, Florence, who had learnt to study every look of Crofton's, saw that he wore a rather pleased and triumphant expression, while her mother looked pale and agitated, happy and uncomfortable all at once.

'He has spoken to mamma before he does to me,' she thought. 'How noble, how thoughtful, how like him!'

So he had, Florence, but not about what you suppose.

'And now let us go and dine; I'm sure it must be time,' said Gerald, who had no thoughts of ideal heroes to nourish, while he sketched heads of very real ones, and who had not looked at the 'Immortality of Nelson' through rosy glasses.

'Yes,' replied Colonel Crofton, 'we've seen everything that's worth seeing, and done everything that's worth doing, and now we'll go and dine.'

Ignorance was indeed bliss to Florence that night. How thoroughly she enjoyed the brown bread and butter and the little silver fish which have obtained for themselves such a name; and how thoroughly she enjoyed that hour or two on the balcony when dinner was over, and the delicate odour of coffee, mixed with the fragrant breath of some unexceptionable cigars, were stealing over her senses. Little steamers kept shooting up and down the river, with their star-like light at the bow. They had on board generally some painstaking musicians, who were

wafting abroad on the sleepy summer air their belief in the 'Power of love,' and in the fact of Britannia being the pride of the ocean; and these airs mingled with the coming darkness, and with the incense of flowers and flattery from Colonel Crofton, who was by her side, and made an atmosphere of perfect happiness around her. Colonel Crofton gave them various historical details connected with the vast pile that loomed grandly before them; and he had the art of rendering his historical details other than dry, and at the same time imparting information. Mrs. Knightly's mistakes with reference to the present occupants of the building were rather humorous. Some fair young faces and graceful forms, habited in the orthodox costume of this period, appearing at a window in the eastern quarter of the Hospital, she, after looking at them through her opera-glass, expressed some little horror and some slight surprise at the nurses being so young and so gaily dressed. It was not until Colonel Crofton assured her that he was on visiting terms with some of the officers' families residing there that she could at all realize the fact of people being in society, and at the same time living in an hospital.

By and by darkness fell upon everything,—'as a feather is wafted downwards from an eagle in its flight,' softly, gradually, entirely—fell upon the mighty river, and upon that colossal pile, that best, noblest monument to the memory of Queen Mary, William the Third's consort, which rears itself on the banks of that river: and that wonderful little rattling noise had been made, which announces that it is sunset; and policemen had gone the rounds to clear out all the strangers from the Hospital. And as they had more than a seven-mile drive before them, it was time to think of starting for home.

So Florence tore herself away from the contemplation of swift-flowing river and time-honoured building, from thoughts of naval greatness and memories of the golden days of that Hospital which was once a palace, and blessed her mother for saying to Colonel Crofton—

'You will return with us, I hope. Mrs. Vining must not monopolize both our cavaliers.'

That drive home was an hour in paradise. The Old Kent Road may not be every one's idea of paradise, but it was Florence's as she sat by his side on that lovely summer evening and heard her mother talking amiably to him. The only drawbacks to this paradise were, that it would soon end for to-night, and that Gussie was not in an enjoyable frame of mind. Florence made the most magnanimous resolves relating to Gussie. When I am married, she thought, I'll get him to talk mamma over to let Gussie and Frank be as happy as I am myself.

Then, as it grew later, the jewelled points that came out in the sky seemed less bright than her own future—less bright than the fate which was surely going to be hers. Once the wife of this man, care, sorrow, doubt, difficulty, could never assail her again; and though she thought, 'What wonder that he thinks me fair?' rose occasionally, deep in her woman's heart, there lurked another which took the form of a prayer—'God make me worthier the love of such a heart as his!'

And so, while Florence dreamt away the time, and prayed to be rendered more worthy of him, her mother sat pondering over the difficulty there would be in communicating her plans to her children; and Crofton thought gloomily, 'If Gussie had but given me a third of the love and devotion her mother and sister so freely waste upon me, I should not have perjured myself in this way.'

'Whoever made dining on white-bait at Greenwich an institution deserves to be publicly thanked, I think,' Florence said as they drew up at their own door; 'it's the happiest day I ever spent in my life.'

'And I have enjoyed it for the first time in my life,' replied Colonel Crofton, as he held her hand for one moment in adieu.

'I won't ask either of you tired girls to come to my room to-night,' said Mrs. Knightly, as she kissed her daughters on the landing, 'but I

want you both early to-morrow—I have something to tell you.'

Florence blushed, and cast her eyes down; and Augusta slightly opened hers as she replied—

'Oh! indeed, mamma, something to tell us, have you? Well, we will be sure to come.'

'Gussie,' asked Florence, rather piteously, as they were separating at the door of the elder sister's room, 'Baines will remain with mamma, so she won't interrupt us; may I come in and speak to you for a minute?'

'Yes, dear,' replied Gussie, rather wearily; 'though what can you have to say that won't keep till to-morrow? However, come in by all means and—say it.'

It was not an encouraging opening, but it was enough for Florence, who forthwith poured her tale of love and hope into Augusta's ears.

'And you really care for Colonel Crofton, Floy?' she asked, when her sister had brought her narrative to a conclusion.

'Gussie, how would it be possible to help it?'

'Well, dear, I am not going to say anything about him, as you wish to marry him, it seems; only I hope, if you do marry him, he'll make you happy. We shall do no good by talking about it to-night, Floy. Go to bed, dear, and believe that, however it may end, I shall only be anxious that it may end happily for you.'

Well, thought Augusta after Florence had left her, as she won't be happy without him, I hope mamma will let them marry. He's not the man I should have selected to put upon a pedestal and fall down and worship; but Floy has done it, and will break her heart if she's thwarted. I dare say, after all, he's not all bad, though he does pass off a screwed horse occasionally upon his friends; he can't be, indeed, or Floy would not care for him.

Long into the hours of that soft summer night golden-haired, light-hearted Florence sat finishing off that head of Vasco de Gama which she had commenced sketching that afternoon, in order that she might have in her possession a perfect memento of that happiest of days.

It was not till her candle had burnt out, and she had nearly concluded her task, that she flung herself upon her bed, and being regularly overtired, straightway began to dream that she was being cooked in biscuit crumbs for the dinner of Colonel Crofton, who had lost two legs and an arm, and who was sitting up to eat her in one of the little cabins in the show ward. When she awoke with a cold thrill of horror at this state of affairs daylight was faintly struggling into her room. Disappointed at not finding it time to get up, she turned round and went to sleep again, and did not wake until Baines roused her at eleven o'clock, to go to her mamma.

CHAPTER VIII.

'Cruel love, whose end is scorn,
Is this the end,—to be left alone,
To live forgotten, and die forlorn.'

The room to which Florence went, in obedience to her mother's message, was a luxurious little apartment, half boudoir half dressing-room. It was octagonal in shape, and pale green in hue. Mr. Knightly had spoilt a fine large square room by having a partition put up, because his wife had desired an octagon. The walls were draped with fluted green silk; the carpet was a capital imitation of moss, with a rich gold cord coiling over it. The dressing-table was richly draped with green silk and lace. Two pier-glasses at opposite corners, resting upon small console tables of malachite; a cheval in a handsomely carved frame, and a large swing glass on the dressing-table, reflected all this tasteful elegance, together with the fair form of the mistress of it all, who was lying on a little couch robed in a white Cashmere morning dress with broad facings, and a girdle of cerise silk. She was a fair woman, with just enough complexion to stand green surroundings without looking yellow herself; and she looked particularly well this morning, as she perceived on glancing at the glass directly opposite to which her couch was placed. The little excitement of the forthcoming communication she was

about to make to her daughters, and the little shadow of distrust as to how they would take the same communication, made her look pinker and more limpid-eyed than usual.

She had in a weak moment made her confession to Baines the previous night, on her return from that delightful whitebait dinner. But Baines had not given her cordial approval to the scheme as yet, and had borne herself rather hardly to her mistress, over whom she exercised power; that is, she had carried her nose in the air far above any conversational level, and she had sighed a great many times. Mrs. Knightly had trusted sincerely, she said to herself whenever she awoke in the night, that Baines would be brought to see things in their proper light, that is, as she, Mrs. Knightly, saw them; for though she was capable of doing great things in the way of making her own family miserable, she was not capable of running decidedly counter to Baines. That Baines had not relented in the morning she felt sorrowfully sure, for the dusky, soft brown hair had been severely arranged in plain tight bands, instead of being tenderly adjusted in the easy flowing style that Mrs. Knightly loved.

But now Baines had retreated to think sulkily over the proposed alteration in the household in the privacy of her own chamber. And the daughters were alone with their mother.

'Dear children,' began Mrs. Knightly emphatically, squeezing their hands as they bent over her to kiss her, 'I have been so anxious to see you. There, take a cup of coffee both of you—do, and then sit down and I'll tell you quietly.'

Fortunately for Florence she had stationed herself in a low chair, in a part of the room where her mother could not see her without turning her head further round than suited pretty, comfort-loving Mrs. Knightly. Therefore, the deadly paleness which overspread her countenance when, at the conclusion of a long, rambling, egotistical speech, Mrs. Knightly announced that Colonel Crofton had proposed to her—asked her to be

his wife—passed unnoticed save by Augusta.

The blooming widow, the expectant bride, put her handkerchief up to her face to dry the meaningless tears when she had quite finished. Neither of her daughters spoke; so presently they had a gentle reminder from behind the embroidered bit of cambric.

'You don't wish me joy, then?—you don't even pretend to hope I may be happy.'

'Mother! what would you have us say?' asked Augusta, as Florence, in obedience to a sign from her sister, passed swiftly out of the room.

'Wish you joy of such a marriage?—No; but I will at the risk of angering you, dearest, dearest mother, pray you, beseech you to pause before you take such a fatal step.'

'How can you be so cruel, Gussie? My own children—my own flesh and blood—to turn against me in this way because I—because I am sketching out a line (a path, that is) that will lead me to happiness independent of them.'

'That is one of Colonel Crofton's phrases, mamma,' replied Augusta, quietly; 'in spite of your so unjustly attributing such a motive to me, I must repeat what I said before, that to marry Colonel Crofton would be fatal to you, fatal to your dignity, fatal to your happiness.'

'Why?—I'm sure I've every reason to think he's devoted to me, Gussie.'

'So he has been to me, and to Georgie, and to Florence,' Augusta could have said with right goodwill, but the consideration that she might injure the cause restrained her. She contented herself with saying earnestly—'Dearest mother, let me entreat you for our, for your own, sake, to keep this matter strictly private until Rupert's return. Do promise me this, mother, at least; do not even even tell Baines.'

Now it is excessively disagreeable to be cautioned against informing the particular person you have sagely selected to be your confidante. Mrs. Knightly had already told Baines, so the consent which Augusta wrung from her, that it should be

kept strictly private, was a waspish one.

And then Augusta went off to give her sister that comfort poor Floy so sadly needed. How will she take it I wonder? she thought, as she walked slowly along the corridor to her sister's door. I know how I should. I should hate him so for putting such a slight upon me, that it would crush all the love out of my heart at once; but Floy is different.

How could she take it, poor child? It had stunned her at first with a dull, numbing sense of pain. And then she had found herself sitting in her own room, hearing every word he had ever uttered to her with horrible distinctness. The strains of the opera she had heard on that night, when she had first met him, came sweeping over her ears in a flood. The perfume of the flowers that had been on Mrs. Vining's table that evening—she could have sworn it was the perfume of those flowers and none others—were wafted in on the light breeze that lifted the hair from her hot, throbbing temples. And above all, every event and circumstance of the preceding happy day at Greenwich, stood out before her like a frightfully vivid dream.

How could she take it? She was moaning like one in a fever, when Gussie joined her; and after some long period of ineffectual soothing on Gussie's part, poor Floy laid her bright head—the head on which such a cloud had fallen—upon her sister's shoulder, and went off into a half-fainting doze. Looking at Floy's pale cheeks, and the sorrowful knitting of the forehead, active hate for Colonel Crofton took the place of the passive contempt she had lavished upon him previously. But she knew Florence's nature well, and she said to herself, 'This infatuation of poor Floy's will be a life-long grief to us all, unless some one or other can influence mamma to make it worth that mercenary wretch's while to marry the poor child, and that isn't a bright side of the picture; for a marriage with him would be a life-long misery to her; I don't know what to wish.'

She knew even less what to wish an hour afterwards, when Florence raised her feverish head from her shoulder, and went and flung herself upon the bed, murmuring—

‘Gussie, it’s all so black; it will drive me mad, I think.’

‘Isn’t Florence coming down to luncheon, Gussie?’ asked Mrs. Knightly of her eldest daughter, as the latter took her place at the table that morning.

‘No, mamma; she’s not well; and I have advised her to lie still and get some sleep.’

‘Not well, indeed,’ replied Mrs. Knightly, petulantly. ‘All my children seem to be turning against me; it’s high time I had some one else to care for and be kind to me.’

Augusta made no answer, for her eyes were raised to her father’s portrait; and she felt at that moment that she could not speak.

‘I suppose you’ll have no objection to go into the park with me, Gussie?’ her mother said after a short time.

‘None whatever, mamma; Florence will be better alone,’ she replied, remembering that Colonel Crofton would probably ride by the side of the carriage, and that it would look less particular if there were two ladies to be escorted. How shall I give that man my hand, she thought, as, according to her anticipation, he rode up and saluted them. How shall I give him my hand, knowing what I do? But I must be careful above everything to guard the secret of poor Floy’s weakness.

Mrs. Knightly was a great fool, but she was not fool enough to affect to be in love. She was only flattered at Colonel Crofton having elected to raise her to the honour and dignity of being his wife, when so many younger women had, as she knew, sighed for him in vain. But she was a great fool nevertheless, for she thought it was herself he wanted, and not her money-bags. She was weak, too, in supposing that Colonel Crofton would play the part Mr. Knightly had delighted to play, and allow her to worry him, and monopolize, and harass him with small attentions, and generally drive him to the verge of mild madness, as had her first husband.

Colonel Crofton, too, was the reverse of weak; therefore he did not act the sentimental lover to the mother of the woman he had really loved—when that woman was present. Therefore her drive was simply unpleasant—not unendurable, as she had feared it would be—to Augusta. Colonel Crofton talked more to her than he did to her mother, and though Gussie felt dreadfully indignant with him for doing so, she was, out of common politeness, compelled to answer him. The result of that conversation was, that she no longer wondered at Floy’s infatuation, for he charmed her in spite of herself. And he determined on using his influence with Mrs. Knightly, as soon as they were married, to punish Gussie for having refused him, by settling her fortune upon her in such a way that if she married Frank Tollemache she would lose it.

‘Does mamma know anything?’ Florence asked, as her sister bent over her anxiously on her return from that drive.

‘No dear, nothing; try not to fret, Floy; I have sent for Mr. Weston, and if he can talk mamma out of this projected marriage, which under any circumstances would be so dreadful—why there’s no saying what may follow, Floy.’

‘Oh, Gussie, Gussie! do you think he will? then I may be happy after all.’

She must be fond of him indeed, if after all she can consent to be made happy by him, thought Augusta; but she only said—

‘Yes, Floy, dear; as there is no accounting for taste.’

Now Mr. Weston was the old lawyer who disliked his friend’s will, which he had been compelled to draw up, however, in spite of disliking it, and despised his friend’s widow.

Woe for the woman who loves, and has no mother, says a writer in whose works Florence was deeply read; but as she lay tossing feverishly on the couch in her room, alone, sad, sick, and solitary, when Gussie had departed to waylay and instruct Mr. Weston, she might have been forgiven for thinking—Woe

for the woman who loves—and has a mother who is matrimonially disposed.

He might not be worth all this suffering and sorrow, all these heart-burnings and brow-burnings that poor Florence was undergoing on his account; but not the less did she suffer, and would continue to suffer. She loved him very truly, and dearly, and devotedly, whether he was worthy of it or not. If he had been proved guilty of a thousand faults, and these had all been carefully collected and spread out before her, she would not have loved him one whit the less. She would have trailed her golden head in the dust at his feet, at his bidding—she, who would have put her little foot remorselessly on the neck of all the rest of the world. She was not one to love to order, and leave off doing so directly circumstances would have rendered it advisable. The strings of the harp of her life had been swept by too strong a hand for them ever to cease to vibrate. So under the present aspect of things, poor Florence was utterly miserable.

‘You will be careful, very careful, Mr. Weston, that you say nothing mamma can feel hurt or offended at,’ Augusta said, as Mr. Weston was quitting the room where he had had half an hour’s undisturbed conversation with her.

‘My dear Miss Knightly,’ he replied, tremulously, wiping his spectacles, which had got slightly dimmed during the interview with his old friend’s daughter, ‘My dear Miss Knightly, I will be careful; depend upon my prudence and dis-

cretion. I will put it to her calmly and dispassionately, that—she can’t be such a fool.’

Oh dear! oh dear! thought Augusta, as he walked away up to the drawing-room, if he says that, we are lost, lost. I had far better have waited till Georgie and Rupert came home.

She sat anxiously in that dark lofty dining-room, where her father had sat and been hospitable for so many years, waiting for the sound of Mr. Weston’s anything but fairy footfall; meanwhile there was a stormy scene upstairs.

On being told, judiciously, by Mr. Weston that Colonel Crofton only wanted her money, Mrs. Knightly had tearfully repeated the offer she once made Gerald, namely, of giving them everything; but when Mr. Weston had expressed himself delighted to accept these terms on behalf of her children, Mrs. Knightly had hysterically refused to stand by her offer, or hear anything more on the subject; and the end of that meeting was anger.

‘Letting Rupert marry in the way he has, was a disgrace, yes, a disgrace to you, madam; but if you marry that sharper, you’ll be a disgrace to your whole family.’

Mrs. Knightly comforted herself under this speech by mentally stating that she had always said Weston was a brute.

‘She must go her own way, and a bad one it is, I fear,’ he said to Augusta, when he came down. ‘I shall have nothing more to do with her, or her affairs.’

(To be continued.)

ENGLAND'S WELCOME. MAY-DAY ANNO DOMINI 1862.

THIS day my portals wide I fling,
Oh, Nations!—and with open hand
I greet you all, who, coming, bring
A Festival throughout my land!

I greet you—from whatever shores!
From where the Ganges’ billows toss—
From where Niagara’s torrent roars—
Or Austral waves reflect the Cross:

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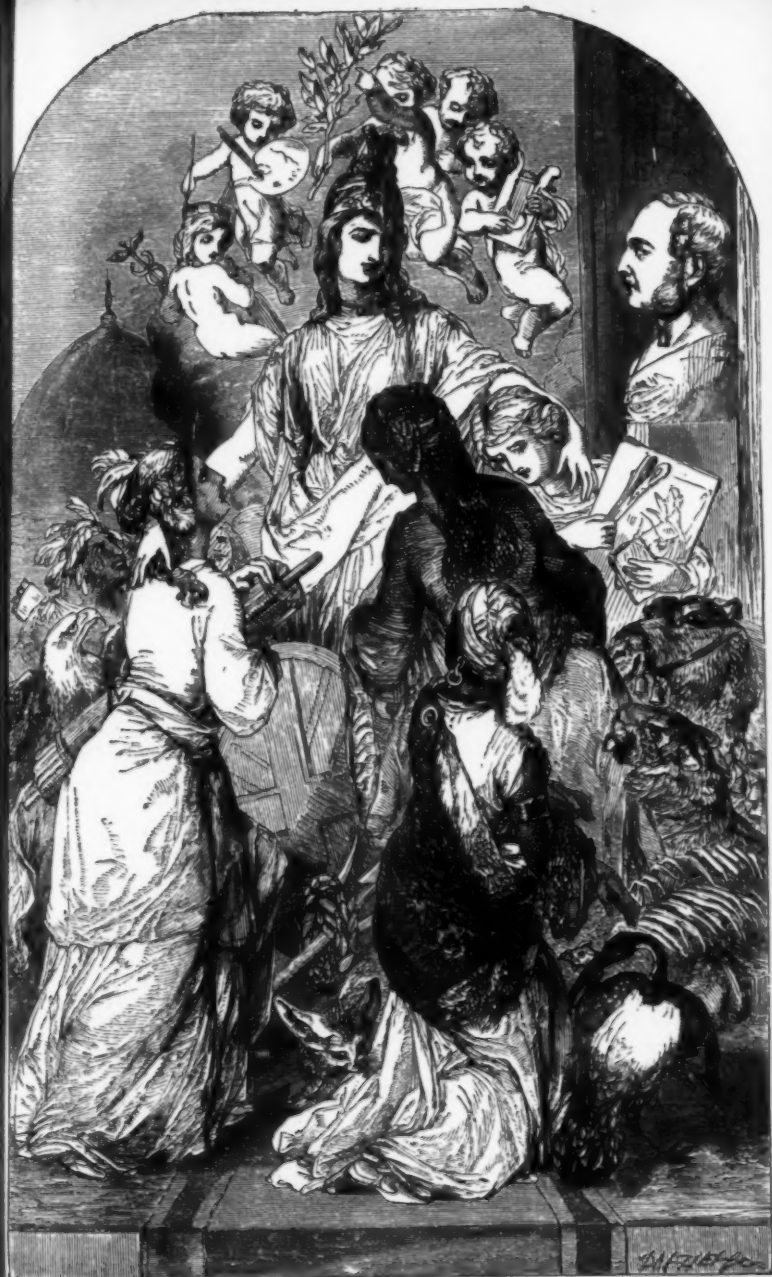
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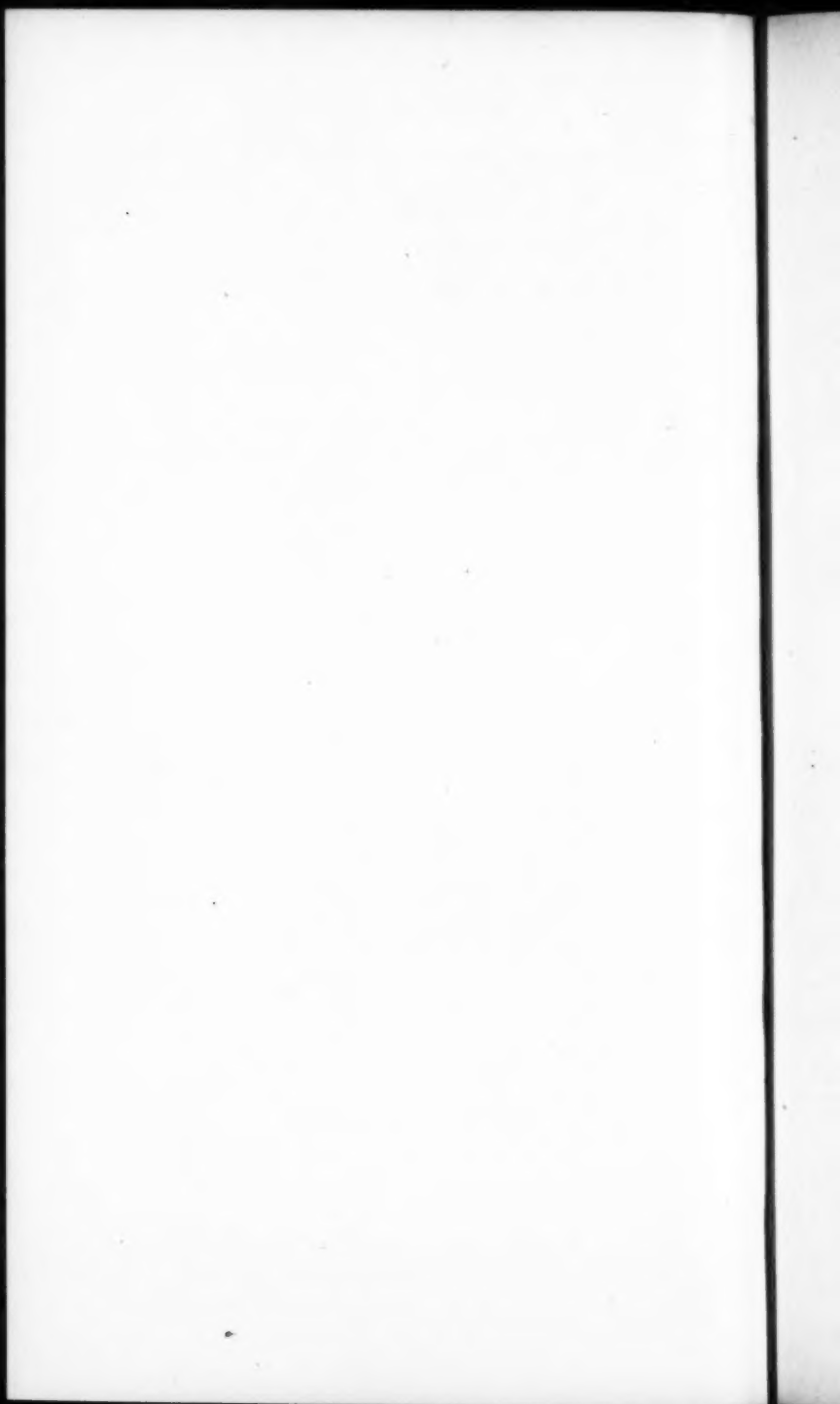
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Drawn by William Harvey.

p. 347.

ENGLAND'S WELCOME.
MAY-DAY,
ANNO DOMINI 1862.



And nearer—where the turbid Seine
Or yellow Tiber rolls along—
From Southern Sea or Northern Main,
I greet you, whencesoe'er ye throng!

Yet must my words of greeting fail!
The hand that forth should welcome hold—
The lips that should have bid you hail—
Alas! the lips and hand are cold!

And She—the Lady of my Land—
Sits sorrowing—nor can bear her part
In this great triumph, which He planned
For Skill—for Industry—for Art!

Forgive me! though this Morn of May
Should give to such sad thought a birth!—
I see through tears a brighter day—
A grander Future for the Earth!

I see a Time—not far away—
Whose Herald now convenes us here—
When Peace and Freedom shall bear sway
From hemisphere to hemisphere:

When link to link shall nations bind
The golden chain of Common Good,
To girdle all of human kind
Into one mighty Brotherhood!

Then, when War's ensigns shall be furled,
And better times bid Arts increase—
Here shall be victories for the world,
And bloodless battle-fields for Peace!—

A Friendly Strife—whose wiser plan
Shall emulate a pure Renown
For benefits bestowed on Man—
Whose meed shall be the Olive Crown!

Unfettered Commerce, and the light
Of Freedom broadened into Day—
Brute Force and Statecraft merged in Right—
And Wrong's traditions swept away—

All these I see!—and know that higher
This day on those gold rounds we rise,
Whereby Earth's peoples must aspire
And struggle nearer to the skies!

Thus, Nations, with grief-chastened mirth
I bid you welcome here to-day—
With solemn prayers for 'Peace on Earth,
Good-will to Men'—this First of May.

THOMAS HOOD.

FLOWER MARKETS.—FLOWER SHOWS.—NEW FLOWERS.

FEW, perhaps, of the readers of 'London Society' know all the charms and all the bustle of a crowded flower-market, at four o'clock in the morning of a fine spring day. It does need some enthusiasm in the cause of flowers to set off to seek them at such an early hour; and my own experience would lead me to imagine that it is a vagary not often repeated. Perhaps when we arrive there is not very much to see—great waggons unloading still, and empty ones moving off; a great many coffee-stalls in apparently good request, and a rush and bustle worse than any railway station.

Still the scene is in some manner pleasant; there is a sort of profusion, which we do not see elsewhere, and it is delightful to see the freshness of the flowers that come from close round London—fruit and flowers all bathed in dew, and from which the perfume has not yet exhaled.

I don't think, however, that it is exactly a time for ladies to do much business. I remember vividly being put for shelter behind a stall, in an ignominious manner, while the purchased flowers were just put together, and it was with a sense of keen regret that the friendly haven was at last deserted. Covent Garden Market, early in the morning, is pleasanter to write of, it may be, than to undergo.

What changes that spot has seen since the days of the 'Convent Garden,' from which it derives its name, with the old pleached walks and the cloistered shades, the sheltering walls and the thickets with wild birds singing! Who at present could picture it as it used to be? and who of the former days would ever have dreamt the change?

Suppose we glance back for a moment, some six hundred years, and trace out the ancient boundaries of the said herb garden and the green orchard alleys of the old Benedictine monks.

In the thirteenth century the ground was still thus employed, and so slow were the changes in the years that followed, that even after three more centuries the record still bears mention of the 'oblong walled space,' sprinkled with trees and cottages, bounded by open meadows, and footpaths leading north; gay gardens mingling with green embowering trees, on the south and east; and, on the western side, the pleasant hawthorn hedge of St. Martin's Lane.

How strange it seems, too, in reading of those old days to meet the familiar name of 'the Seven Acres,' and thinking of dairy-farms, and of pleasant rambles in fields with 'cowslip gatherings,' or with heaving swathes of fragrant falling grass,—to see the name applied to Long Acre, as we know it!

The market at Covent Garden grew up, as most markets do, by slow degrees at first. The large square I mentioned being left a good deal open, tempted people to stand with baskets there to offer their wares for sale, and thus at last it came to be established as a known market-place.

A century later the removal of the Stocks market gave an added impetus to this already flourishing rival. The old Stocks market seems, however, not to have left itself without a 'household word'—it gave its name to one of our most fragrant and of our best-known flowers, which has long conveyed it to many a far-off land, and which still keeps its place on Covent Garden stalls on every market day. Few flowers are pleasanter than those old-fashioned stocks, and very few indeed are more largely purchased. Musk is, however, a successful rival—so many close, dark rooms owe to the hanging musk-plant all that they have of green or of sweet scent. It is quite pleasant to read the statistics of flower-markets in London; though they make little show, it is evident that such thousands of narrow courts must still share at

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Drawn by E. K. Johns. n.

p 350.

THE ARTIST IN THE LONDON STREETS:
A STUDY IN THE FLOWER-MARKET, COVENT GARDEN.

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least in the pleasure that flowers impart. Maid-servants and needlewomen are said to be among the most constant purchasers of single pots or bunches of spring flowers, but this is chiefly in the shape of a penny plant, or of a bunch of primroses, or of mignonette or wall-flower, to bloom for many a day in the little window whereby the owner sews.

Amongst all ranks, indeed, the taste for flowers seems rapidly on the increase, and year by year they and their belongings take up a larger space.

Last year the Floral Hall was a grand advance, viewed as a mere beginning, though very far at present from the gay mart that it will doubtless become in time. And this year already, a new spot in front of it is given to the display of flowers. This must be pretty—a square enclosure divided into beds, devoted entirely to different kinds of plants. How elegant and sweet such mosaic will surely be, as summer brings in its squares of red geraniums, and its masses of white petunias; its clumps of fuchsias, and its long, thick lines of the fragrant heliotrope; noble begonias, massing their leaves together; and graceful standards rising up majestically;—with all the flowers there met, what a brilliant patch it may be, and what a study of colour to arrange its pattern!

Perhaps, however, we are hardly adepts in general effect at present. Each individual will settle his own niche, and patchwork results will possibly ensue.

Our Parisian neighbours understand much better how each separate stall may set off the next, or be set off by it; and though at the Madeleine—that narrow street of little, tent-like stalls seem really made to hold each its single group, there still is a pleasing quaintness, and a gay tout-ensemble which is very French. And the people's heart is so in their flowers! See that old market dame, who looks far from poetical, how eagerly she discusses artistic effects of colour with a kindred soul met amongst the crowd! She is engaged just now in making up a bouquet, talk-

ing all the while of every flower's effect; and, growing beneath her fingers, it makes good her theory, and comes forth very lovely. Some one is anxious to purchase that pretty plant; but no—it is not the time. She is a real artiste, and far be it from her to interrupt her work.

A good many contrasts are to be seen at once between French and English markets, as well as a few strong likenesses. We do not often see a couple of flowerpots pounced upon, and carried off forthwith by a determined and well-gloved purchaser, regardless of weight, and yet more of dignity. But we do, now and then, see Paris fashions followed, so far as asking double price, and a good deal of bargaining consequently goes on.

Ferns and Begonias are popular things in both markets; but I think in Paris they make more account of trifles. The forced white lilacs even, that go on from Christmas—little bushy plants, all covered with white blossoms; pretty little bunches of common garden flowers; violets in all months; the sweet mignonette, and the China roses. Now in England, doubtless, in the great country houses, all these things abound; but in London markets they are not much affected by the purveyors generally—I mean to such extent as to place them within reach of every one.

The actual experience amongst ladies, of an English flower market, is chiefly, no doubt, confined to Covent Garden, and to the central avenue, in the afternoon, with the array of pots containing flowers which stand along the sort of covered way. The Arums and roses, geraniums and Begonias, that figure in the sketch of the flower market to-day are very fair specimens of the best of these.

I wish we could follow some of those flowers home, and see the fate they meet with. Will that Begonia Rex go outside a window? or is there a hope for it of filling, as in Paris, the pretty carved oak boxes and the bracket slabs, and even the stands of dark artificial 'carving,' which would mutually show, and be

shown off by, the beautifully marked leaves?

A dusty window—a sunny aspect—and a box that is only just overstrewn with moss, will be, I greatly fear, amongst us, a more frequent fate for them; and the bright geranium will stand on a pretty plant-table; and, it may be, some charming climbers will droop in ornolu stands just by the drawing-room door. But perhaps if those dark Begonias were to fill *that* post, in a carved box of sand;—if those gay geraniums stood outside the windows, mingling with many Arums (lilies of the Nile), and with climbers there, the general aspect would be much improved, and the next drive to the market for a new stock of plants would be delayed much longer.

It always, however, surprises me exceedingly that azaleas and rhododendrons are not ten times more common. The first, indeed, do require a little shelter sometimes, and their leaves are in some ways more difficult to keep clean; still, any one possessed of any sort of glass, or even of a good window, can easily grow them well; and when they are grown, they are so very charming. The scent, and the shape, and the colour of their blossoms seem to be really perfect, and, besides, they last very long if watered and shaded properly.

The azalea 'magnificent' is one that I recommend most urgently. It is snowy white, with sometimes a cerise streak; and, indeed, the flowers now out upon my plant are fully two inches wide. There is of this also a double variety. Azaleas should, after flowering, have their roots protected from becoming dried, and be placed out of doors to ripen the young wood. In winter the plants will look green and pretty long before the flowers come out in spring.

The rhododendrons, however, are almost all hardy plants. Their thick evergreen leaves look well at all times and seasons—filling up and backing boxes of other plants.

They may be kept in-doors in any aspect, so that they have in summer a time of good strong sunshine;

and, with occasional sponging, the foliage will keep always very green and beautiful. Rhododendron sesterianum is a noble white and very sweet-scented flower, of enormous size; and 'Princess Alice' is an exquisite plant, also sweetly scented and covered with flowers of a beautiful rosy-white colour, somewhat resembling in form and foliage the pretty 'ciliatum'—a well-known favourite, with its white, early blossoms.

I must not forget, too, the pretty and fragrant Cytisus, of which a single plant is enough to perfume a greenhouse. Here I must give a caution. There is a little yellow flower—I believe a kind of genista—which looks so nearly the same, if not seen together, that I was reminded lately of the many times that the one is bought for the other, under the assurance that 'the scent will come out in the warmth.' This, however, is apt not to take place; and the proper Cytisus is most charmingly fragrant at all times and seasons, as far, at least, as my knowledge of it extends. It is an easy plant to manage in a drawing-room plant-stand—blossoms very early, and even when not in flower is attractive from the gracefulness of its growth.

And then comes another and a very important branch of the market trade—the many bouquets bought to adorn a room, and the many more meant to be worn that evening. I don't know that a gossip on arranging nosegays would be just here of service. One can only wish that all the flower-sellers were like the artistic Frenchwoman, and thought a little also of *la gloire*; for very rare and costly are the few English bouquets which could bear comparison with those of the Paris flower-girls.

One thing, however, we have in our hands. When we want knots of flowers to wear in the hair or dress, or just to make one of the lovely vase sprays, so far more pretty generally than any massive bouquet, we can then surely think a little of what will be pretty when it is in its destined place, instead of only what is in itself attractive.

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perience goes, it is for this a question more often of *style of growth*, than either of shape or colour, of course supposing that these are not objectionable. A little delicate spray, such as the exquisite orchid *Odontoglossum pulchellum*, is far more beautiful than many more showy things. The coral shreds of some of the red *Begonias*, the little sprays of the pretty white *Eriostema*, and many slight graceful heaths, are also a great deal more valuable than we often think them: they make a knot, or lighten one, in a very charming fashion. After all, we need only think how things would grow. Matted together, as we thrust flowers together, they could not live a day. Intertwining each other gracefully, they are really lovely, and for small demands of this kind, nothing, I think, is pleasanter than having the living plants, and gathering when we want one, just a single flower.

The outer market is chiefly for popular country plants, and those of a hardier class;—its charm lies mostly in their great profusion, and in the many groups which give such picturesqueness. The choicest flowers, however, lurk chiefly under glass—some on the stalls of the Floral Hall, some in the large conservatories. It is, however, at the exhibitions of May flowers at Kensington, and in the Regent's Park, and even at the private nurseries round London, that the plants are best displayed; and there, indeed, they are something so bewilderingly lovely in their masses and clumps and banks of expanded blossom, as to leave one fairly lost in such a maze of beauty.

The flowers, too, seem fresher at home in their own abodes—and if we want to grow them we can see how they are growing; while the exquisite gardens, and the scenery of such ferneries as some of these present, is indeed a setting worthy of such flowers.

But of what special things shall I write? I set down, indeed, the names of a few great favourites, which I thought would be all one wanted. But then came a raid amongst Mr. Veitch's orchids, he

too most kindly affording me all sorts of information—gathered from their collectors—as to the native ways and the natural growth of these floral jewels—gems, indeed, of every brilliant colour, forming groups of loveliness such as one rarely sees, and perfuming whole conservatories with their peculiar and delicate kind of scent.

These plants, I hear, have of late greatly increased in number and in importance, and they will thus appear this year in unusual force at the horticultural fêtes, for which some new and amazing beauties—including a rose-butterfly—are said to be preparing.

But how shall I describe even the flowers I saw?—such scent and such variety—such colour and such grace! One no longer wonders at the days and weeks that travellers spend contentedly seeking out the hiding-places and studying the 'home ways' of such a brilliant tribe—roaming amidst the forests, and on the cloudy hills, and amongst the steep high rocks, on which they wave their wreaths.

Exceedingly various are the habitats of these flowers, some rejoicing in the fierce tropic heats, and others again discovered, as the *Lycaste Skinnerii*, with all their blossoms covered with the snow and rime of the early morning in the Nubes of Mexico; thus exposed by turns to the damp and heavy clouds and to the brilliant rays of a Mexican noon-tide sun.

Very faint indeed is our English sunshine compared with the ardent rays that there fall on the banks they haunt;—great banks with steep sides covered for many a yard around with the waving leaves and the lovely rosy flowers of these charming things. Mr. Skinner observed the flowers first displayed upon the altar of one of the churches in Mexico; and seeking eagerly for so beautiful a new plant, he found it to be of a very local growth, the banks I describe being mostly all contained within the circuit of perhaps ten miles.

Many new varieties are, however, likely to be obtained from those we already have. They vary now in

colour from very deep rose to very nearly white, and with their increasing popularity they will doubtless grow more numerous. They seem, indeed, made for drawing-rooms, not too hot. Very few are the room-plants that will last four months, and always look so beautiful as these; and the flower-buds expand so rapidly in a bright warm gleam even of winter sunshine, that it is truly pleasant to watch how they unfold. The more light the plants have the more rosy their hue becomes; and yet, perhaps, the pearly colour of some that are almost white may be thought to surpass in beauty the brilliance of the rose. Brilliant sunshine by day, absence of heat by night, careful watering at the roots alone two or three times a week, and an occasional sponging of the leaves if dusty, with a peaty soil and a well-drained flowerpot, are the chief points to be considered in the way of culture. The *Lycastes* indeed are said to be amongst the most easily kept of orchids. Dr. Lindley has predicted for them a future like the tulips; and truly if tulips were introduced under some unfamiliar name, and with many cautions, we can well conceive their seeming to require a great deal of care and attendance, with their summer's moisture and their autumn's dryness; while the delicate beauty of some of the pretty cup-shaped white flowers, tinged with their rosy blush, might well deserve the care which they would then meet with.

A delightfully sweet-scented orchid is the *Vanda suavis*, the perfume being very subtle, and penetrating the atmosphere without being so oppressive as some flowers become when in great profusion. I remember hearing of a *Vanda* found some years ago at Sarawak by Mr. Low (a well-known collector), the flowers of which were described as hanging down in chains of ten or twelve feet long, the many branches being suspended by the arm of a large tree;—these chains of flowers, all cinnamon colour, and purple, and pale yellow, dropping down from each, forming a wondrous sight. These amazing quantities of flowers waving so high amongst the leaves

must have an effect upon the traveller's eye more strangely beautiful even than we think; for it should be remembered that in our flowering trees the blossoms are all above—we do not see, as they do, the canopy of flowers as we walk below.

But I must go on to mention some more of the lovely orchids that are now in bloom at Chelsea. What can be lovelier than the *Dendrobium racemes, nobile*, with its bunches of waxen flowers hanging from overhead, lips deep-lined with a purple glow, and the expanded petals catching reflected lights, tinged with a rosy shade, as though the half-closed flower had stolen the brilliant dye before it yet opened wide. Picture the *tortile* with its ivory horn, forming a fairy cup of such matchless grace, stained deep within with purple and rosy hues, like drops of some brilliant wine, left by the fairies there, and spreading its fire fair wings—shreds of a fabric that is beyond compare. Others, again, are hanging in lovely drooping clusters as of white sea-shells strung, and in each it seems that a mantle of softest velvet is left by its absent occupant, flung loosely down within.

Very unlike these, in all but the beauty shared, is the *Cattleya Skinnerii*, all of a brilliant mauve, its surface sparkling as with silver dust, or with perpetual dew, while it hangs its gay wreaths down. More of the pendant clusters fall round *Dendrobium* baskets, and the crimson tubes unite in their own deep bells the royal purple's richest and rosiest hues.

I cannot, indeed, describe the loveliness displayed when these most glowing crimson and white flowers hang down low in wreaths, gleaming amidst dark ferns. The group is indeed so exquisite, that without first seeing the flowers thus arranged, it would be hard to picture them; having seen them once, yet harder to forget them. No centre flowers are wanted, only spreading ferns, and orchid sprays drooped down from the side of some open vase. Yet, if centre flowers there must be, suppose a small flight of white 'East Indian butterflies'—of *Phalaenopsis amabilis*—to call the lovely flower

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by its own long name. A wood full of these flowers was the other day described to me in a most graphic manner, as in the Eastern islands they hang in glimmering clouds, all quivering and waving, as the wild bird's wing sweeps by. I was bid to picture the bough of some great tree in the densest forests of the Philippine Islands. High up on the drooping branch hung whitely myriads of spread wings, a very cloud of large pure 'white butterflies;' and, as the branch swept down, the streaming flowers rolled on the waves of their lovely wreaths, dark green leaves supporting the hovering flowers, till, as they drooped down lower, the white shining stars grew fewer, and only drew scattered brightnesses from the dazzling cloud that hung so high above.

To see such sights as these is enough to tempt a traveller to plunge with boldness into those strange shades where Nature seems so lavish and so exuberant in her beauty.

Still, clouds of orchid flowers are not the only things of beauty that may be 'joys for ever.' Wordsworth would tell us all another—a most true tale—from the banks of our own lakes, where he sat one day and watched the daffodils.

'I gazed—I gazed—but little thought
What wealth to me the show had brought;
For oft, when on my couch I lie,
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye,
Which is the bliss of solitude :
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.'

A MAY CAROL.

IN IMITATION OF THE OLD POETS.

THE lark's aloft—the wind blows soft—
The merry maids are straying
In open glades, 'mid verdurous shades,
To list what Love is saying.
Should we be longer staying?
Let sleep be chid from each dull lid,
And let us go a-Maying—Maying—
Let us go a-Maying!

The hawthorn white bursts into sight
'Mid forest's green arraying :
And perfume rare breathes on the air,
Hid violets betraying.
We brook no more delaying!
Up—up! Away! while breaks the day!
And let us go a-Maying—Maying—
Let us go a-Maying!

We wait—we wait beside your gate—
On pipe and tabor playing;
With garlands, boughs, and wreathed brows,
Our chosen Queen obeying!
We suffer no gainsaying!
We summon you to join our crew!
Come let us go a-Maying—Maying—
Let us go a-Maying!

SOCIAL CONTROVERSIES: THE LAND OF THE GORILLA.

'Sein Vaterland muss grösser seyn.'—GERMAN STUDENTS' SONG.

'The facts we deliver may be relied on, though we often mistake the age and country where they happened.'—FIELDING.

A MAGAZINE, the object of which is to sketch for our edification and amusement the various phases of London Society, would be incomplete without an occasional reference to those entertaining controversies and discussions with which it is the habit of that great world to vary the tedium of its severer labours of pleasure or business. Seldom without one of these upon its hands, the style of a player or a preacher, the invention of a novelist, or the veracity of a traveller, will often afford to it material for a very pretty quarrel, wherein a certain amount of combativeness, a little vanity, a partial knowledge of the question at issue, and a considerable admixture of positive error, will combine to impart to the question that *souçon* of acerbity which a great poet has assured us is an essential in the composition of human life.

Of a quiet and peaceful temperament—

'Averse from rows and never calling watch,'

and dissenting altogether from the dictum, in this particular, of the philosopher in question, it will be my desire, if I should occasionally seek to examine into and set society right on such matters, to proceed in a spirit of candour which those more immediately concerned in the question are apt to pretermitt; and as a friend of the common family,—for as such I shall hope to show myself worthy of being regarded,—to help to subdue the conflagration, and even to rescue out of the fire some small salvage of good.

In this spirit I have had under dispassionate consideration the controversy which lately engaged the attention of the town upon M. Du Chaillu's narrative of his travels in 'Equatorial Africa;' and have the satisfaction of being enabled to submit to society three entirely new and original conclusions in regard

to it, all of which, though entirely different one from the other, I believe to be correct; and any one or all of which may be adopted by both contending factions without any sacrifice or compromise of their honour and dignity.

The interest with which this work has been received would seem to have been attributable partly to what was considered the novelty and freshness of its details, and partly to the imputations which have been cast upon its veracity. For my own part, I must confess that I rose from its perusal with totally different views of the matter, having satisfied myself that there was much in it that was within the knowledge and experience of us all, and that it was characterized rather by absence of novelty than by want of truth.

It is remarked by Fielding, in his 'History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams,' from which I have derived one of my epigraphs, that notwithstanding the preference vulgarly given to those romance writers, as he terms them, who entitle their books 'The History of England,' 'The History of France,' &c., it is certain that the truth can be found only in the works of those whom he calls Biographers, and the world, writers of fiction; that the business of the former is chiefly to describe countries and cities, their statements of facts not being by any means reliable, so that they may be more properly designated Topographers or Chorographers; whereas with the writers whom he terms Biographers the facts they deliver may be relied upon, though they often mistake the age and country where they happened.

I have often thought that the writers of works of travel might likewise be divided into the Topographers and Biographers. Of the former, who devote themselves chiefly to describing countries and cities,

many notable examples, which it would be invidious in me to particularize, might doubtless be discovered by the curious in that list of books for sale at greatly reduced prices which occupies the fourth page of Mr. Mudie's monthly literary programme. Of the latter, the less common but more reliable works of travel, may be instanced those of the late Don Manuel Esprida, the Spanish traveller, for whose interesting letters we were indebted, some thirty years ago, to the late Mr. Southey; of Lien-Chien Altangi, the eminent Chinese traveller and 'Citizen of the World,' introduced to us by Dr. Goldsmith; of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia; and the late Captain Lemuel Gulliver—works of travel in the great world of human nature of which we never tire.

In investigating, therefore, the claims to authenticity of a volume such as that under consideration, the discriminating critic will not fail to regard it from the biographical as well as the topographical point of view; since, if it fail to give satisfaction in one, it may nevertheless prove most valuable and reliable in the other.

As I accompanied M. Du Chaillu in his narrative, I could not help remarking whatever might be its *topographical* inaccuracies, it appeared to be, in many particulars, *biographically* correct; that the nations which he had visited appeared not wholly unknown to me; and that the creeds and customs which he represented as prevailing among them had either fallen under my own observation or been described in works with which I was acquainted of previous authors. This circumstance appeared the more extraordinary, as I had certainly never visited 'Equatorial Africa,' or perused any descriptions of it; my travels, either of flesh or spirit, never having extended beyond the shores of that people which the short-sighted civilization of a bygone age irreverently characterized as 'ultima orbe Britannos;' or, at all events, those of the nations with which that gifted race is more immediately associated.

Yet, wherever I accompanied the

traveller, I seemed to find myself 'en pays de connaissance.'

There were the Mongpwes, for instance, the leading tribe of the Gaboon, as they are described by the writer, who, he tells us, are so much divided into classes, whose characteristic is their great eagerness for trade, and whose ambition it is to possess vessels, and place their factories on out-of-the-way points of the sea-shore. I admit that their name was not familiar to me, but I found it impossible to resist the conviction that I, too, knew, and had even dwelt among them. As for those unprincipled Mongpwes whose great aim, we are told, it is to get trust; who enter into reckless speculations, without capital upheld by their 'Books,' and, using the reputation for honesty as an aid to fraud, develop all kinds of overtrading and rascality, I was peculiarly impressed with the absence of novelty in their characteristics; and I could almost fancy that I had had my memory refreshed in regard to them even recently, though it is some time since I taxed my brain with reading more profound than the telegrams or the 'London Gazette;' or extended my wanderings in search of knowledge beyond an area of a couple of miles from my home, which would scarcely include Basinghall Street or the Old Bailey.

Suspending final judgment, however, until I had proceeded a little further,—for it is not wise to attach too much importance to isolated coincidences,—I found myself among the 'Camma' people, those smart traders, who, our traveller tells us, are very like the Mongpwes, and have the same language, with local variations, who are divided into two tribes, one owning the shipping trade, and the other engaged in producing and sending its goods to its neighbour to trade off; among whom the wayfarer settled down for a time in a village which he christened 'Washington.' Those 'Cammass,' who were some years ago, it appears, under the rule of a great king, but who now own no monarch or head chief, having split into two factions headed by two leaders, Rampano and Sangala, who

at the time of our narrator's visit were at war with each other upon some fancied grievance. I must confess that the names of Rampano and Sangala are entirely new to me; but if M. Du Chaillu had not assured us that he had himself arbitrated between them, and settled their dispute, I could have averred with certainty that the Cammas were at war at this very moment, and were very much in need, indeed, of some friendly intervention to compose their differences.

Wandering on as though in a dream in which combinations the most novel and unexpected occasion no surprise to us, I found myself with M. Du Chaillu among the Oroungo tribe, with their middle-sized monarch, King Bango, who spoke French, and whose vanity was gratified by a salvo of musketry. That powerful despot, as the traveller describes him, who rules by his personal influence, in a uniform with gilt embroidery over it, with a tinsel crown which had been given to him as a special gift by a notorious slaveholder named Don Jose, with whom he had had large dealings; King Bango, who complained of the English, and was quarrelsome with the traveller, professing to believe that he intended to insult his crown. Surely, even with my limited experiences, I had some knowledge of King Bango and his dominions before I became acquainted with Equatorial Africa, though I am bound to confess, in this instance also, that I do not remember their names. I suspect I know something, too, of the potent slaveholder to whom King Bango is indebted for his crown, though I never heard him named to 'ears polite' as Don Jose; but as I desire to speak or think of that personage as little as possible, I shall not further expatiate in regard to him.

In many of the more minute details of the habits and manners of these savages as given by M. Du Chaillu, the absence of novelty was so noticeable that the descriptions of them might almost have been borrowed, as I have said, from well-known works of previous authors. For example, the ridiculous fetishes

which the traveller describes these tribes as hanging about them, and to which they attach such great reverence, were referred to more than a century since by a philosopher and traveller named Shandy, whose adventures have been handed down to us in the writings of one Sterne. Speaking of a tribe which he names '*Connoisseurs*,' he says: 'The whole tribe of them are so beset with the bobs and trinkets of criticism, their heads are stuck so full of rules and compasses, and have that eternal propensity to apply them on all occasions, that a work of genius had better go hang than stand to be picked and tortured to death among them.' This tribe is known to exist at the present day under the name of '*Critics*' or '*Reviewers*,' and may very likely be found to be identical with the Balakai and Apingi of M. Du Chaillu.

Again, there is nothing new in the description given by the writer of the judicious system which prevails among the aristocracy of '*Equatorial Africa*' in regard to the culture of the marriage relations; where, by numerous family alliances, a chief is sure of influential connexions upon whom he can call for help in any emergency; and where, in consequence, women are mainly valuable as a means of such connexions; where, upon this system, young girls are actually married to old men for political reasons; where conjugal infidelity is compensated for in the current objects of barter of the tribe, and a lover can secure the wife by a payment to the husband. All these circumstances are so well known as to be scarcely deserving of repetition; and undoubtedly a traveller is bound, if he have nothing new to tell us, to reproduce, for our amusement or instruction, something of the old that has not been recently under our notice, which can scarcely be said of the customs and practices referred to. Indeed, much more is known on the subject than our traveller has told us. This suppression may have originated in a consideration on his part for public morals; but having said so much, I cannot but think that he might have completed his picture by noticing that so common

are cases of conjugal infidelity in 'Equatorial Africa,' that a separate court of judicature is appointed to deal with them, the chief judge of which is more hardly worked than any of his brethren, and that all the details of the evidence are printed and published, without any interference on the part of the head men of the tribe, and are purchased by the natives and perused in their families with the utmost avidity.

One more example will, perhaps, suffice to satisfy a candid reader that whatever may be the defects of M. Du Chaillu's narrative, it bears many evidences of truth, if not of novelty. In his description of the position of woman generally in 'Equatorial Africa,' he notices particularly the manner in which the men, reserving to themselves all occupations and privileges by which honour and distinction are conferred, content themselves with carrying only their spears and guns, consigning to their women the pots and pans and other culinary utensils necessary to make them comfortable. In a recent excellent brochure entitled 'Remarks on the Education of Girls, with reference to the Social, Legal, and Industrial Position of Women in the present day, by Bessie Rayner Parkes,' the identical state of things described above is thus referred to:—'Unskilled in the peculiar mental weapons of the other sex, women now appear to stand towards men in a position parallel to that of the churl or bourgeois of the middle ages, to whom the arms and accomplishments of knighthood were denied.'

Not to weary the patience of my reader with further illustrations, I will proceed to my conclusions, which I will arrange, as I promised, under three heads: either that 'Equatorial Africa' is a much wider region of the inhabited globe than it has hitherto been supposed to be, comprising many more nations and tribes than has been imagined, and the tribes

and nations inhabiting it have been and are known by other names than those by which they are described by M. Du Chaillu; or that the work is an ingenious parable or allegory, wherein, as dear old Sir Thomas Browne hath it, 'things are set down not truly, but as it were in a picture or similitude;' or, thirdly and lastly, that it is not so difficult to prove black to be white as has been contended by logicians, that there is more in common between civilization and barbarism than the former would, perhaps, be prepared to admit, and that all human nature is much the same, either in the life within or the life without, unless tamed and softened by a nationality more universal and all-comprehending than that of country or colour—a civilization of a deeper, truer, and purer source than that of mere external knowledge and conventional refinement.

As there are no conclusions, however well demonstrated, which are not subjected in these days to the cavils of the uncandid and illogical disputant, it is possible that an objection may be raised to mine that they leave the actual question at issue between M. Du Chaillu and his critics very much where it was before. Not to waste time in profitless discussion, I would submit that if this were so, it would be their greatest merit; and under any circumstances it is to be borne in mind, that such is not infrequently the effect of the highest judicial decisions, and is, indeed, generally the ultimate and only end of disputations and controversies on all subjects—a consideration which might almost suggest to the philosophical mind the avoidance of them altogether.

If my laborious investigations should tend in any degree to promote this desirable object in London Society, I shall not in vain have accompanied M. Du Chaillu in his perilous travels in the regions of 'Equatorial Africa.'

THE CHILDREN OF THE NEW FOREST.

IT was a delicious summer evening, the fresh breeze pouring new life into lungs choked with thick London smoke, and the setting sun darting its last red rays through the waving corn, when we issued from the station door, wearied and cramped with long sitting in a crowded carriage, and were heartily greeted by our host, whose domains we were about to invade. A few minutes served to settle us on the vehicle in waiting, and the train had hardly proceeded on its course when we were merrily bowling along towards our home in the New Forest.

Even the country drive was a luxury to those who had for months been penned up in the very heart of the metropolis, and after a mile or so had been passed, proved to be not without its excitement. The favourite old horse—high Rufus, in honour of the second William, and in allusion to his bay coat—trotted off in great spirits, knowing that every step took him nearer to his stable. His owner, however, not wishing us to be taken by surprise, told us casually that Rufus generally fell down when descending a hill, and that he always liked to have the vehicle pushed behind him whenever he came to an ascent; but that those who were used to him knew what to expect, and did not object to these trifling failings. As, therefore, the road consisted, on an average, of six miles of hills and two of level ground, it may be imagined that mental excitement was combined with physical exertion in a degree rarely witnessed. However, we have started with the intention of taking everything as it came, and therefore watched Rufus carefully as he went down hill, and pushed behind when he went up hill, until we arrived at our intended domicile; the vehicle having been very useful in holding our baggage, but as far as ourselves were concerned, rather an honourable appendage than a personal conveyance.

Evening had set in long before, and the glow-worms had started one by one into their full beauty as they

lined the forest pathways like mundane stars shining in imitative rivalry of the glittering points in the dark dome above. One of them we placed on the splashboard by way of a lantern, and on our safe arrival laid it carefully among some herbage just outside the door, a position which it held for three days and nights.

Such a lovely spot is the New Forest; the soil so various, the trees so magnificent, the flowers so perfumed and luxuriant, and the birds so plentiful and musical. May the Enclosure Act, that has turned many a mile of grand forest into base turnip land, never lay its withering grasp on the New Forest! and far be from our eyes the chilling sight of the splendid oaks, which we have so long loved, lying like murdered corpses on the ground, their white and gnarled limbs stretched out as if stiffened in deadly agony, and their rugged bark, erst rich with moss and lichen, stacked in heaps by their sides.

Some unimaginative persons talk of the dull uniformity of the forest—you might as well talk of the dull uniformity of the Strand or Regent Street, and with much more reason of the dull uniformity of Rotten Row. The real, deep, primitive forest is ever changing, and in one day may pass through a thousand phases. Putting aside the two great epochs of summer and winter, of leafless branch and wealthy foliage, of green-clad boughs and snowy shroud, together with the intermediate state of spring's delicate green and autumn's rich ruddy brown, there is hardly a day when the forest does not assume a new aspect as each hour passes away, and in which its threefold harmonies of sight, sound, and scent are not woven into a thousand varied modulations, like a fugued melody of some great master in music. Mendelssohn always reminds me of a forest. No one can appreciate a forest who has not passed whole days in its solitary depths, and watched it from the early morning hours to the

deep, dark shades of night. Different birds, insects, and flowers make their appearance at their chosen hour, and there are many creatures which emerge from their hiding-places only for a brief space, and then return into darkness and solitude for the remainder of the day. The sweet voices of the song-birds have their appointed times, and the perfume of flower and leaf changes with the march of the sun.

Full of pleasant memories, and gay with anticipations for the morrow, we, two old foresters, flung open our window to the utmost, so as to be lulled to sleep by the owl and the silence, and to be awakened by the merry songs of the morning birds. We awoke at the intended hour, but heard no birds, nothing but a rushing sound as of rain on leaves. Horror! the sky is of one uniform leaden tinge, and the rain is pouring in steady perpendicular torrents, as if a second deluge were impending. What shall we do for the next few hours, while the household is asleep within and the rain pouring without? Let us brave the storm, accept a thorough soaking as an inevitable fact, and sally boldly into the forest just to see its aspect after a wet night and during heavy rain.

A few minutes served to encase ourselves in the very oldest habiliments that our wardrobe could furnish, and to see us on our way. Twenty yards sufficed to drench our clothing as effectually as if we had just emerged from the depths of a river, and from that moment we became delightfully indifferent to the rain; having a kind of wild exultation in the feeling that we could walk about in the midst of the watery torrent without seeking shelter or needing an umbrella. I have seldom enjoyed a walk more than that; saunter in the forest glades, with the noisy patter of the rain-drops on the leaves overhead, the pleasant smell of the crushed fern, the primitive independence of being thoroughly wet and caring nothing for it, and the plish-plash of our feet as every step pumped water out of our boots. Back to the house, through the rude path, now some six inches deep in red mud, a brief toilet, and a very welcome breakfast.

Still rain, rain, more rain; and what shall we do? Cats'-cradle afforded a little amusement, uniting the advantages of adventurous combination, unexpected results, and the least possible bodily exertion. Even this recreation, however, is scarcely exciting enough to be continued for any lengthened period; and after a desperate but abortive attempt to play at fives in an empty garret, we extemporized a game at bowls on the floor, the 'jack' being represented by a bradawl stuck in the boards, and the bowls by two india-rubber balls, one solid and small, and the other hollow and large.

The beauty of the game was enhanced by the sloping nature of the floor causing the balls to roll away until they were either checked by the wall or fell down the staircase. This difficulty, however, was overcome by the inventive genius of one player, whom modesty forbids me to particularize, and a few handfuls of oats scattered over the floor served at once to arrest the ball and to test the player's skill in guiding his bowl neatly into the little hollows left here and there by the grain. This absorbing pursuit carried us over three or four hours, when its course was suddenly arrested by a summons to dinner, the greater part of that refectory having been cooked in the solitary sitting-room of the establishment.

Rain still heavy, if anything heavier than before, and what shall we do? Let us throw knives at a mark like Ho Fi, the Chinese juggler, whose portrait we had lately seen, represented as in the act of aiming a broad-bladed knife at a fellow countryman standing spread-eagle-wise against a board, and whose outstretched limbs and rigid head were encircled with similar weapons.

No sooner said than done. A target was rapidly improvised, a stout board fetched from the shed, a couple of 'rymers' sharpened, and in a few minutes all hands were deep in this most absorbing pursuit, which, when afterwards imported into the metropolis, proved of so fascinating a character that I have known the whole male population of a drawing-room desert their fair

companions and give themselves up an unresisting prey to 'pegging.' Nothing is simpler than this game. You take a sharp-pointed knife, chisel, or other implement, lay it flat along the hand, the point directed up the arm and the handle just projecting from the finger-tips. You take a good aim at the target, fling the knife so as to cause it to make one half turn as it passes through the air, and if you have performed all these actions correctly, the knife darts into the target with a heavy thud, and there sticks quivering with the violence of the blow. It is, in fact, a refinement on 'Aunt Sally,' quite as exciting and not half so fatiguing.

Night again drops her dank, wet veil over the scene, and our visit to the New Forest bids fair to be a total failure.

Brightly shone the sunbeams on the following day; the dismal splash of rain had ceased; the black, cloudy sky had changed to deep blue; the breeze was charged with perfume, and the air filled with melody. A host of chaffinches were congregated in front of the window, pecking about among the grass and twittering merrily with their sweet little chatter. All nature seemed to rejoice in the sunshine, and the deep glades of the forest, broken by sundry gleams of golden light, invited us to its presence.

The ground was still wet under our feet, the heavy ferns dropped showers of moisture as we brushed against their wide fronds; and as the wind stirred the branches above, occasional shower-baths came pattering on our heads. But how changed was everything around. The birds flitted from bush to bush, heedless of the raindrops scattered by their rapid movements; the air was filled with glittering insects, and the busy hum of many wings gave light and brightness to the scene. The long avenues of oak and beech produced effects of brilliant many-coloured light and deepest shade that no painter could hope to imitate; the heavy masses of holly that studded the forest gave a mysterious darkness to many an inlet, while the wide clusters of foxgloves reared

their tall heads in the patches of sunshine and waved their lovely petals in the breeze. Foxgloves, indeed, seem to be the leading characteristic of that part of the forest, for it was impossible to look down any avenue without seeing a cluster of these magnificent flowers shining out against the dark masses of shadowy verdure, and giving wondrous effects of colour just where an artist would most want them.

It was most beautiful, too, to watch the golden-winged insects come darting across the sunbeams, issuing like visions from shrouded darkness, glittering for a moment like living gems as they shot through the narrow belt of light, and vanishing into the mysterious gloom beyond, as if suddenly annihilated by the wave of a magician's wand. More pleasant to the sight than to the touch, particularly for persons endowed with a delicate skin. I never thoroughly appreciated the exceeding torture that the plague of flies must have inflicted on the Egyptians until I had passed a few hot summer days in the New Forest.

Flies of all sorts, sizes, and colours surround the hapless victim, and render existence a burden and a torment. Great, buzzing, wide-winged, large-eyed flies charge at him with a trumpet of defiance, and, in spite of clothes, find some weak point through which they may insert their poisoned dart. Tiny flies, too small for audible murmur of wings, and too gentle of movement to be noticed, run nimbly about his person, creep up his sleeves, slip down his neck, get into his eyes and nostrils, and leave memorials of their presence in a series of little angry red pustules like those of nettle-rash, and quite as annoying. Others, again, will set to work in a calmly composed and business-like style, alight on his hand or wrist, produce a case of lancets from their mouths, and bleed him with the practised skill of an old surgeon.

Besides all these foes, the forest is haunted by myriads of horrid ticks—flat-bodied, active little creatures, with legs that cling like burrs, and heads barbed like the point of a harpoon. These insidious animals

swarm upon the passenger, and are sure to discover some method by which they may creep through the clothes and operate on their victim. Imperceptibly the barbed head is thrust under the skin, and the creature begins to suck the blood of its human prey with such voracity that before long its flat and almost invisible body swells into a blood-distended bag, and the tick looks more like a ripe black currant than an insect. If it should be discovered, it must in no wise be torn away by violence, or its barbed head would remain in the wound and be the cause of painful inflammation. There are two modes of ridding oneself of ticks. One method is by lighting a large fire, taking off all clothing, and rotating before the blaze as if attempting suicide by roasting. The ticks cannot endure the heat, and soon fall off; but as this process is hardly feasible in an English forest, it is better to have recourse to the second method, which is simply to brush them with a feather dipped in oil.

As for myself, in spite of wearing large gauntleted leather gloves, and tying the wrists and ankles with string, the insects led me such a life that I hardly dared enter the forest. At last a bright idea struck me. I rubbed my hands, ankles, face, and neck well with naphtha, and kept a little bottle in my pocket for renewal whenever the odour seemed to become faint and ineffectual. After taking this precaution, I enjoyed a delightful immunity from insects, which more than compensated for the very unpleasant scent of the naphtha. Even in the course of a long day's sojourn in the forest depths, not a fly dared meddle with so potent an odour, and it was most amusing to see a great loud-winged insect come charging along, ready for action and thirsting for blood, and then to see it pause in full career, balance itself for a moment on quivering wings, and dart off at an angle from the hateful scent.

Upon many a tree were the nests, or 'cages,' of the squirrel, denoting the abundance of those pretty little animals in the neighbourhood. Before very long, a reddish dot was seen

moving among the grass, and we immediately determined to 'stalk' up to the creature and to watch its habits. Being accustomed to woodcraft, and knowing how to take advantage of every cover, to pass among branches without noise, and to avoid snapping dried sticks with the feet, we crept to a tree-trunk within six yards of the squirrel, and there sat quietly looking at him.

There he was, blithe and joyous, totally ignorant of our presence, but still watchful, raising himself occasionally so as to look over the tops of the grass blades, but never seeing us on account of our rigid stillness. It was most interesting to watch the pretty little animal as he went skipping over the ground in little hopping steps, now stooping to feed, picking up something in his paws, holding it to his mouth in a dainty and well-bred fashion, tasting it, and then throwing it down in disdain. Then he would disappear entirely below the grass, and next moment he would be sitting upright, his bushy tail curled over his head, and his bright eyes gleaming as he looked around.

Suddenly a lad came running towards us, making much more noise in crashing through the fern than a dozen full-grown elephants would have produced. Up jumped the squirrel, glanced hastily towards the spot whence the unwelcome sounds proceeded, and dashed off for the nearest tree, looking wonderfully like a miniature fox as he scudded over the ground, his body stretched to its full length, and his bushy tail trailing behind him. A long leap, and he had jumped on the trunk of the tree towards which he was running, and, according to the usual fashion of squirrels, slipped round it so as to interpose the trunk between himself and the supposed foe. But this manoeuvre exactly brought him face to face with us, and at the distance of only a yard or two, and I never saw a squirrel look more bewildered than he appeared on making this terrible discovery. He never stopped for a moment, however, but fairly galloped up the tree, ran along a projecting branch, made a great leap into another tree, traversed that also,

and in two minutes was fairly out of sight.

Here let me offer an indignant protest against two subterfuges under which the destroying nature of man hides its ugliness.

There are some persons in whom the destructive element is acknowledgedly developed in all its fulness, who live but to hunt, to shoot, and to fish, and who really seem to have gradually drilled themselves into a heartfelt belief that to destroy the furred, feathered, and scaled inhabitants of the earth is the noblest aim of man, and one to which every other object must necessarily be subservient. As a natural corollary of this proposition, follows the extirpation of every living creature that can interfere, either actively or passively, with their sport, the result being to depopulate the country of every being in which is the breath of life.

All the beautiful and truly useful weasel tribe are to be killed because they will eat hares, rabbits, and feathered game; all the hawk tribe fall under the same ban; the ravens, crows, and magpies are to be killed because they are apt to rob the nests of partridges and pheasants; the little birds because they eat the corn on which the pheasants might feed; and even the squirrel is now reckoned among the vermin because it is known to regale itself occasionally on young birds, and possibly on their eggs. The keeper who destroys the greatest number of these 'vermin' earns the highest praise from his master; and, to all appearances, the very perfection of a forest in the eyes of a sportsman would be that it should not harbour a single creature except those which are dignified by the title of game, and thought worthy of death from the hand of their owner.

It is a pitiful sight in this grand forest to view the handiwork of the keepers in the shape of noble hawks, ravens, martens, squirrels, and other wild denizens of the woods nailed on the trunks of trees or hung in withered clusters from their boughs. I do not believe that a true sportsman would find his amusement curtailed by their life, feeling sure that nature can generally keep her

own balance, as is exemplified in countries where the Game Laws were never heard of, where game preservation has never been dreamed of, and where the game abounds in spite of the swarming 'vermin,' far more numerous and powerful than those of our own country.

Another, and more noxious kind of destroyers, is found in those pseudo-zoologists who hypocritically conceal their love of slaughter under the guise of science, and, necrologists as they are, never can watch an animal without wanting to kill it. The daily papers afford abundant instances of such mock science; and it is well known that even a parrot cannot escape from its domicile without running the most imminent risk of being shot. Not a rare bird has a chance of escape if it once shows itself within the limit of the British Isles; and I can but think with exultation of those deluded individuals who spent much powder and shot, and more patience upon some rare sea-bird which had settled in a lake, and which afterwards proved to be nothing but a stuffed skin ingeniously anchored by a long line. Such persons never think of watching the living being in order to learn the wonderful instincts with which its Maker has gifted it, and the interesting habits and customs belonging to the individual or the species. Should they come across a rare bird, their first regret is that they have no gun with them, and instead of feeling delighted at the opportunity of gaining further knowledge, they only lament that they cannot take away from the bright being that life which it is so evidently created to enjoy, and the causeless deprivation of which is literally a robbery of its birthright.

One of the principal objects of our expedition was to ascertain the mode in which the snipe produces the remarkable sound called 'drumming,' from its fancied resemblance to the distant roll of the military drum. To my ears, however, the mingled whizz and hum of a slackened harp-string gives the best idea of this remarkable sound.

It must be premised that, during the breeding season, the male snipe,

like many other creatures, assumes new habits and utters new sounds. Generally, the flight of this bird is short and fitful, as is well known to all sportsmen, and seldom lasts more than a few minutes. But during the breeding season the snipe becomes an altered being. Towards evening, it leaves its marshy couch, and rises to a great height in the air, where it continues to wheel in circuitous flight for a considerable period, mostly confining itself within the limits of a large circle, and uttering almost continually a loud, sharp, unmusical, and monosyllabic cry, which may be roughly imitated by the words 'chic! chic! chick-a chick-a, chic! chic!' &c. At varying intervals it sweeps downwards, making a stoop not unlike that of a hawk, and producing the sound called drumming, during the stoop.

How the bird drums has long been a matter of doubt, some naturalists attributing it to the organs of voice, others to the wings, and others to the tail. To set this question at rest was therefore an interesting pursuit, and to that purpose several successive evenings were devoted.

As soon as the snipes began to drum, we set out for the marshy ground over which they flew, and by dint of cautious management succeeded in ensconcing ourselves in a dense thicket of thorn and blackberry, where we were perfectly concealed, but whence we had a thorough command of the sky. Not choosing to trust to my single observation, I had two friends with me, one of whom is a well-known bush huntsman of Africa, and the other an old and observant inhabitant of the forest. We were also supplied with powerful glasses.

Before we had lain very long in ambush, the desired sound struck our ears, proceeding from a snipe that was circling high above us. We watched the bird for a long time, but he never came near enough to give a good view. Several others afforded us much disappointment, but at last all our trouble was fully repaid. A fine snipe arose at no great distance, and just as if he had known our object and intended to

give us his best aid, began to cry and drum just over our heads, and at so small a height, that as he wheeled in airy circles, his long beak and bright eye were clearly seen even by the unaided vision, while the double field-glasses with which we were supplied gave us as excellent a view of the bird as if it were within two yards.

It was, then, quite clear that the drumming sound was not produced by the voice, as the bird repeatedly uttered the cry of 'chic! chic! chick-a!' simultaneously with the drumming. Without offering any opinion, we repeatedly watched the bird, and then compared our observations. They were unanimous, and to the effect that the sound was produced by the quill feathers of the wings. The bird never drummed except when on the stoop, and whenever it performed this manœuvre, the quill feathers of the wings were always expanded to their utmost width, so that the light could be seen between them, and quivered with a rapid tremulous motion that quite blurred their outlines. Our observations were repeated during several successive evenings, and always with the same result.

There is perhaps no locality in the whole of this country so well adapted to the natural historian as the New Forest, the conditions of soil, elevation, and foliage being so prodigally varied, that almost any creature can find a refuge in some portion of its limits. Take, for example, the spot on which we resided, but which I do not intend to particularize, lest its sacred recesses should be profaned by the step of outer barbarians, and its wild glades polluted by empty porter bottles, broken crockery, and greasy sandwich papers.

The cultivated ground in front of the house reached a rapid and narrow brook. Beyond the brook was a large expanse of marsh and shaking bog, harbouring multitudes of snipes. In the middle of this swamp our drumming observations were made. The ground suddenly rose beyond this bog into a wide but not very high hill, covered densely with heather, and giving

shelter to grouse and pheasants. About four miles further the heath was abruptly ended by a large fir-wood, in which the deer loved to couch. We once devoted a whole morning to tracking a deer by its footsteps or 'spoor', and after some three hours' careful chase, found the creature lying couched among the fern. Ravens were often seen heavily flapping their way over the heather, and on one or two occasions our eyes were gratified with the grand sweeping flight of the buzzard, as it soared on steady wing, inclining itself from side to side like an accomplished skater on the outside edge, but appearing to make its way through the air as if by simple volition. Bright-plumaged woodpeckers fled screaming through the forest depths, and many a tree-trunk bore witness of their persevering labours.

The human population of the forest have, in course of time, become deeply saturated with the wild, uncultivated air of the region in which they reside; and many an aged man has never seen a town in his life, or ventured beyond the limits of the familiar forest lands. A practised eye can mostly detect a forester at a glance, a strange family likeness being observable in all who have passed their existence in this place—probably owing to the continual intermarriages which necessarily occur among them. Even the tone of voice is of a peculiar nature, and the drawling, high-pitched chant of the thorough-bred forester is not likely to be forgotten when once heard. In fact, the forest is to its aborigines what the desert is to the nomad Arab; and the wild Bedouin can hardly feel more terror at the idea of entering the habitations of civilized man, than does the forester at the notion of exchanging the trees for houses.

I remember that on one occasion, after the hay had been got in, a cart-load was destined for some stables at Southampton. The fragrant trusses were placed on the waggon, the horses harnessed and all was ready for the journey, when an unexpected difficulty arose in the person of the carter, a fine young fellow of six-and-

twenty, one of the first in the field and all the rustic sports. After a vast amount of prevarication, he flatly refused to leave the forest, and when peremptorily ordered to do so, he sat down on the roadside and sobbed like a child with sheer terror of the unknown regions beyond his ken. An exact parallel to his despairing fears may be often seen in the crowded thoroughfares of London, where a child has lost its way, and stands weeping in the depths of its misery, beset on all sides by vague fears, and as hopelessly bewildered as if it had been suddenly transported to another planet. Take such a man out of the forest, run him off by express train to London, put him down at London Bridge or Charing Cross, and he would become a maniac from the rush of ideas to the brain, like that Kaffir chief whose head was turned by the engines of a steamer, and who deliberately hauled himself to the bottom of the sea by means of the chain cable.

There is also a strange race of beings called the woodmen, who possess certain prescriptive rights from time immemorial. They are the most independent set imaginable, and laugh at law or justice. Their carts are at least two feet wider than is allowed by legal authority, and while driving along the road they are totally regardless of the right and wrong side. Those who meet them may turn aside if they like, but they proceed on their course without paying the least respect to the tacit regulations of the road. One Saturday, while driving on the high road, we met a long string of wood-carts, all on the wrong side, all straggling in such a manner that we were fain to draw our vehicle into the ditch, and on every cart were one or two woodmen, lying in a state of senseless intoxication, and leaving their horses to find their own way home—a task which they certainly performed with an accuracy that warranted the confidence reposed in them.

Many of these men would not be sober until the Tuesday; they would sleep off their headaches on Wednesday, on Thursday and Friday

they would earn a week's wages, and on Saturday they would set off to the public-house and renew the last week's scenes. This kind of life suits their lawless natures, and they would rather lead this wild and reckless existence, than become honoured and useful members of society, as they might easily do, considering the wages which they can earn. Perhaps their wives and children might hold a different opinion, especially from Saturday evening to Wednesday morning.

Vipers are delightfully plentiful in the New Forest, and during our limited sojourn I saw three distinct varieties, the common, the light grey, and the yellow, the last mentioned being the largest living viper I ever saw. Apropos of vipers, it so happened that some farmers were paying a passing call, when a labourer brought me a moderate-sized viper hanging to a string. Acting on the impulse of the moment, I flung my knife at the reptile, and by a wondrously fortunate shot, drove the blade fairly through the spine just behind the head. My friend followed suit, and transfixed the snake about the middle of its body. The farmers were quite aghast at our skill, and it may be imagined that we did not disabuse them of their good opinion by attempting a repetition of the feat.

After a number of experiments on the living viper, I found that the reptiles could never be induced to bite at a stick, however great the provocation might be, but that as soon as any living creature came within reach, they were sure to strike. The foresters were actuated by a wholesome dread of the viper, but feared the harmless blindworm far more than the really venomous reptile. One of the labourers brought to me the upper half of a blindworm squeezed tightly in his cap (the creature having thrown off its tail according to custom), and was almost pale with horror when I took it from the cap with bare hands. Mr. Waterton's feat of carrying twenty-seven living rattlesnakes from one room to another afforded a sufficiently terrifying spectacle, but in the eye of a genuine forester could not compare with the prowess dis-

played in seizing a blindworm with the bare hands.

Perhaps the night walks in the forest afforded the most pleasant reminiscences of our visit. At nightfall we used to put a compass and some matches in our pockets, and start off for the depths of the forest, taking care to step very gently so as to give no audible alarm, and to keep ourselves well in the shade, so as to avoid detection by sight. It was most delightful to wander thus into the heart of the primeval forest, among the great oaks and beeches, to seat ourselves face to face on the soft moss at the foot of some tree, and listen to the weird-like sounds alternating with the solemn stillness of the woods. At times the silence became almost audible, so profound was the hushed calm of night; while at intervals the sharp yapping bark of a fox might be heard in the distance, the drowsy hum of the watchman beetle came vaguely through the air, and the locust-like cry of the goatsucker resounded from the trees. These curious birds were very common and quite familiar, allowing us to approach within twenty yards of the branch on which they crouched, or sometimes sweeping with their ready flight to the ground in front of us, and then pecking merrily away at the various insects which traversed the grass. There is, by the way, a curious superstition about these birds. If they come close to a house and sing three times, they prophecy a death in the family; if five times, a birth; and if seven times, a wedding.

It is strange that man and animals should fall so readily into the primitive life, and allow the instincts to regain their original and legitimate sway over the habits. Even the very cows learn the customs of the bush in a marvellously short time, and walk with the same lifted step as the antelope that has spent all its life in the forest. One night, as we were standing under the shade of a tree, a slight crackling of dry sticks was heard. We drew deeper into the shadows, assured ourselves that nothing white was visible in our dress, and that our sticks were well grasped; for a

night walk in the New Forest is not without its perils, the poachers being perhaps the most crafty and desperate in England. Man or beast however, the creature passed by, but kept so closely in the shade, that we could not even catch a glimpse of its form. Stealing gently to the spot, we felt the ground carefully, and soon found the fresh spoor of a cow, which had got into the forest and instinctively moved as if it were liable to be hunted as soon as seen.

After a number of experiments, we found that nothing is so utterly invisible in a forest at night as darkish grey, but not too dark. Black is seen with comparative ease, red is nearly invisible, and so is brown; but with dark grey the only visible portions are the hands and face, so that a pair of dark gloves and a dark mask would render a human being quite undistinguishable at two yards, provided he remained in the shade, and did not allow his form to be defined against the sky.

One night was truly memorable. We had started as usual, when we saw an odd kind of light among the trees, for which we could not account. First we thought it was a paper lamp hung up by way of a trick, but soon found that it was far beyond the trees. Surely it must be Capella shining dimly through a fog; but on looking more carefully, Capella was discovered without any foginess about it. Suddenly my companion gave a hideous shriek, executed a *pas de seul* expressive of astonishment, and employing, as is his custom when excited, language more remarkable for energy than elegance, cried out that 'it was a thundering big comet as safe as the bank!' And so it proved to be. No more forest for us that night, but out came the telescope, the sextant, and the note-book, and the whole evening was passed in taking observations and running into the house to record them. As the mighty comet stretched its fiery train over the zenith, great was the excitement as its vast proportions expanded with the darkness of night. 'I'll get its angles between the stars,' cried my friend, 'and you

measure its length.' Off to the house at full run.

'How many degrees?'

'Eighty-two and a half.'

'Humbug! I don't believe it.'

'Look for yourself, then.'

'Must have been wrongly handled; I'll measure it myself.'

Off rushes the excited astronomer, sextant in hand, and in five minutes is back again.

'How many degrees is it now?'

'Eighty-six I make it.'

And in this manner we spent the greater part of that night, the comet seeming to lengthen with every hour. It was certainly a most startling occurrence. No one expects to walk out of a house, according to usual custom, and to meet a full-blown comet in the face. But here was the stranger, waving its flaming sword over our heads, and stretching its vast length over a greater space of sky than was occupied by the great comet of 1858, which had spent so many weeks in attaining its full size.

Much more is there to say of the New Forest; of its many-tinted flowers, its wealth of insect life, its wild and piquantly-flavoured fruits, and its wonderful depth of foliage, its grand old trees, among which the 'king beech' raises its royal head in acknowledged superiority. It is indeed almost a new world; and to a Londoner affords a fresh current of ideas that regenerates the mind like fresh blood to the heart. Here all conventionalities cease: Mrs. Grundy could not live for five minutes in the forest depths, there are no neighbours to criticise the appearance, no gossips to decry the character. Man lives for a while the real unsophistical life of Nature, and, it may be, will learn many a lesson for which he will be the better until his dying day, and perhaps after it. And these privileges may be gained by just taking a railway ticket for the nearest station to the Forest (say Southampton) where the traveller will be deposited in less time than is often occupied in getting to an awkward suburb of London. But our space is at an end, and we must reluctantly bid a farewell to that valued spot, hoping soon to visit it again. J. G. W.

THE MYSTERY IN DAFFODIL TERRACE.

I.

THE house was pointed out by a young Arab of the crossing, who had been skipping on before the decent inquirer in black, as the manner of his tribe is. And he pattering away to his Augean beat, the decent stranger looks up through his glasses at the house with much relish—as though it were a ripe and luscious fruit. He seemed to have ample value for his money, and literally gorged his eyes with the prospect.

Had he been a miser he might have groaned over his mispent pennies: for the spot was advertised ever so conspicuously by a group of the great unclean—men and women of the broad rag world hanging about, in the middle of the road—leaning on the rails, and on the gate, kept fast locked, to have their full of staring. Scraps of this shabby community dribbled away at one end, while other scraps came and restored the fit balance at the other. And though no one of them could say that they expected the front to tumble flat like a 'practical' scene out of a pantomime, or that the doors were to be flung open and they were to be invited in to hospitality, and be otherwise handsomely treated, still they all had some good purpose in staring at the house, and found the process satisfactory. They had been staring since eight o'clock on that morning, and would stare on until dark. And, it may be repeated, they had good method in their staring.

II.

The next question is—for those not of the locality—what these units of the great corps of the unwashed were staring at. At a house; but this is too general. At number five, then, Daffodil Terrace—number five being but an inch out of so many hundred yards of neat, bright-red brick ribbon, reeled off in a terrace *ad infinitum*—a row of pantomime houses projected in *eternum*—beautifully chastened, and in a manner Ruskinized by little edging and con-

fectionary work of parti-coloured bricks, mainly mustard colour, and producing a very 'tasty' effect. Contractor had done his work nobly and was actually reeling off miles of a similar pattern, just like an expert shopman at his counter—on the new building grounds out towards the country. But why should the unwashed, and the butcher-boy element, and the strap-and-pot element so fancy this special number five, particularly when they had a whole file, stretching to number two hundred and eighty or so to pick from? Why the fact is, it was whispered that a very ugly business had taken place there that morning—very painful for the immediate family, and most undesirable for the neighbourhood in reference to a letting or other view. The life of a line of respectable tenements should move in smooth, equable course, and should not be disturbed by vulgar spasmodics. As it is with your true persons of quality, who have nothing marked in dress or manner, so with your true houses of quality. And yet here was nothing short of suicide, gross, flagrant, outspoken suicide entailing a distressing publicity—and the whole notorious train of coroner, police, doctors, post-mortems, and the other disagreeable incidents. The curious part of the business was, that this was about the last sort of catastrophe mankind, in that neighbourhood, might reasonably have looked for. For only a few days back they had been very busy with an expected nuptial rite, whereof the scene was to be in that very house. The actors, properties, incidents, and decorations of that ceremonial had all been in possession of the public for some time. The neighbourhood had been rife with the particulars. It was a common fund, in which all had a common interest. They knew the name of the man, the woman, his substance, her substance, what difficulties lay between—in short, the whole prelude of the thing. It was to be a very gay thing, and a very happy thing; much desired too by

all parties. The name of the woman or girl (so people from within the rails told it to those without) was Margaret—Margaret Joy—an only daughter. The house was the house of the Joy family, father and mother: the name of the man, who was to take this woman for his wedded wife, was Mr. Hengist, a City person who had travelled, and the name of what lay up stairs, covered up with a sheet, was Martha Joy, wife of the house.

Now for this marriage, and this suicide, and the tangled yarn that led to both. Suicide lies up there in ghastly reality: marriage is scattered to the winds now beyond hope of re-establishment.

III.

To begin by looking back a few years or so, when the Joy family first came to the decent neighbourhood, and the placid respectability of speckless brickwork. The head of the Joy family, then about forty-five; the gentlewoman who was titularly mistress, but in plain fact, a sort of lady-like upper-servant, ordering meals and looking after all things—about eight-and-thirty. She, and the bright brick house had about come together; for Joy, elderly as he was, had married and moved into the neighbourhood almost simultaneously. House and wife came together; house quite new and brilliant; wife second hand and a little worn—nay, bringing with her drags *impedimenta* in the shape of human baggage—a growing youth—her only jointure as a widow. Joy, this ripe bridegroom of forty-six, was a quiet, placid merchant-man, with a cold, dry, calm face, not overcharged with blood;—one who crept along the walls and dark lanes of life, keeping out of the light, and avoiding brushing skirts with all he met;—a tall man, a bent man, a slight man, a silent man;—a man that had made money silently; without emotion or agitation had married, and moved into the staring brick neighbourhood almost simultaneously;—a man that had been perhaps proved by fire in the earlier portion of his days; that had been wrung and wasted by the hot winds of tremendous domestic tribulation.

It was said, indeed, that his whole family, mother, sisters, and one brother had been swept away suddenly—in about a week's time—by a destroying plague, then epidemic. Such a bit of tragedy was in good keeping with that sad and impassive face, and might be read there in plain bold figures. Some sort of tragedy had been scorched and seared into his face, and he wore the scars very palpably.

He then wandering along this sad sea-shore, fell in with this Calypso of a widow, and finding she had some sort of balm, which, without curing, did somewhat allay the pain of his open wounds, took her in—love they were both past—she, perhaps, more moved by a sort of compassion or sympathy for the poor silent wayfarer. However, on whatever pretext, they were joined, and came to the house together, taking with them, too, her daughter, soft Margaret—a sweet, milky-looking child, whose destiny it was to be passive in every possible relation of life. The son was an evil scapegrace, who had rushed away into open wickedness, and it had been well had he been never more heard of. But, unhappily, he showed himself, comet-like, at irregular intervals, and always under circumstances of dubious colour, in a sort of disreputable halo; so that this fitful manifestation, though satisfactory as allaying any personal fears that might be entertained as to his safety, was attended with such pain and discomfort to his surviving relation, that on the whole it had been better he had sunk at once for ever into the limbo or worse place prepared for such disreputable meteors.

On the new Mrs. Joy these wearing sorrows told with nearly the same characteristic handwriting as on her husband's features. They had each their own private store of affliction; and what little balance of cheerfulness was over and above they spent with all good heart upon each other. And so they made their lives somewhat sweeter—after a fashion.

IV.

He was in a sort of traffic or business, as has been already mentioned,

and had brought together a decent sufficiency, to which he was daily adding. Thus the true bitter of sorrow, poverty, had not oozed into their cup. Grief is more tolerable when it can sob on soft cushions, and recline undisturbed, without work or labour, in handsome apartments. For such sorrows there are luxuries. And so they moved forward upon the even tenour of their way, inhabiting the bright vermilion house, and, in some sort, one of the pillars of that select villa neighbourhood. Naturally all persons round took pride in denizens of such position; and thus they moved forward steadily and peacefully—impelled by the sure hand of destiny—on to the fatal beginning of that end which has been shadowed at the opening of this story. For though we know that grim and pitiless Greek notion of fate has been swept away, still to us, who look down at the march of a story and its characters, it has very much the look of that old cruel force; and we see the men and women of the piece walking on unconsciously to their doom; and as they walked, the Chorus in those old Greek plays chanted *Ai! Ai!* compassionately bewailing their fate in, as it were, a monk's hymn.

V.

There had come to live, some few doors below them, a wealthy man called Hengist, but of a somewhat curious nature. A man touching five-and-thirty, solitary, and hurrying with extraordinary swiftness down the headlong *montagne Russe* of old bachelorhood. He would have been at the bottom and lost irremediably had not some one laid hold of him and checked him.

But of a very curious nature—suspicious, and slightly eccentric, which comes of living alone—an avaricious creature, which was strange in one so young; who had been abroad in India, and come home invalided, and tolerably wealthy; had been left more moneys; and now, too delicate to add more moneys still to that, had retired to watch life and look on jealously. Everybody, of course, had designs against his personal liberty; all—more particu-

larly the women—were banded together to suspend the Habeas Corpus specially in his behalf. Along those trimly carved walks female bandits were abroad. They lay in ambushcade.

And yet he was amiable in his character; full of charities, and the tests of charities, local subscriptions. For him kept house a matron of tolerable and satisfactory antiquity. He read of the long evenings by his shaded lamp; walked abroad during the day; went into London now and again, but with terrible reluctance; and fancied he was killing weary days with good effect. So he, too, moved forwards, slowly yet surely, to whatever crisis our modern Fate kept in store for him.

This was not so very long arriving. We may guess easily enough. These lonely wrecks are easy spoil. Betimes every morning, the soft, milk-faced girl used to go forth to take her country walk, as she fancied it, and inhale the morning air well charged with copious villa particles. Regularly would she flit by the window—somewhere near the same hour—where this Hengist would be seen framed in his huge sheet of plate glass, in a miscellany of urn and teapot and rolls, and the newspaper in full sail, making his lonely breakfast. Regular, too, used this Hengist lift his head, and look out on her as she passed. The true charitably-minded will see a purpose in this steady morning, artful baiting of traps, and such unhandsome hints. But she was wholly innocent of any such purpose. In the long file of shining brick mansions there was much more company, just as busy, and with about the same unflagging regularity. That breakfasting behind plate glass was an ordinary ceremony enough along the line of villas.

The course of these things we may all guess out pretty easily. In what comes by custom we take interest. This strange suspicious Hengist began to look for her regularly, as he did for his rolls and newspaper; and if rain or other reason hindered her coming, became uncomfortable, as though he had been defrauded of a portion of his breakfast. With him all women

were more or less marauders—in respect to monied men at least; but here he was impregnable, and perfectly secure, for he could look on unperceived and unsuspected. By-and-by came opportunity, as opportunity will come always. The 'administration' charged with the arrangement of such little matters contrived it by the agency of a lost dog, or bird, or kitten. Bird it was. The young lady's parrot had one evening fluttered away, having a chain to its foot, taking the intervening walls like fences, and hotly pursued. Mr. Hengist was in his garden at the time, and captured it promptly. Presently the sad-faced parent comes and knocks, and to him the prisoner was handed over—not, however, before he is bidden to sit down and rest, though he be not tired, and they condole with each other on some district grievances—ill scavengering, inefficient watering of streets, and the like. Then he goes his way. Such a foundation the other is not slow to improve. Sometimes they meet going in to London, by rail or stage, sometimes along the public highway; the sad-faced gentleman accepting tolerantly rather than seeking him. By-and-by he gets on a stage further—still in his old cautious way; receding now with mistrust—now advancing—until at last he has entered, has been made known to the sober, sorrowful mistress of the mansion, and to the damsel that was wont to trip past his window as he breakfasted.

He was not unamiable, this Hengist, and soon domesticated himself readily enough. Not one of them sought him. The parents were glad because they thought such an acquaintance would vary the somewhat monotonous existence of their daughter's life. For, odd as he was, his oddity came not of vacuity. He had seen much and travelled a good deal, and was ready enough with a dry speech and caustic remark, not altogether unamusing. So he was very soon dovetailed into their course of life: came in of evenings when it suited him, played cards, read books to them, or to himself when it pleased him, and on the whole found it a rather agreeable sort of club.

There was a cousin, too, who came out occasionally from London; a gay, open-faced, open-mouthed carle, rather boisterous, and wearing his heart, not exactly upon his sleeve, but displayed conspicuously upon every part of his person. The cousin, Wilden by name, came out in rather conspicuous contrast beside the somewhat crusty nature of the other. He, in truth, rather looked down on him, as deficient; was merry at his expense, and gave him a private nickname. But he could rarely come of evenings; so that Hengist had a tremendous advantage over him. Night, after all, is the true season for social business.

Sometimes it flashed upon him that he was standing on the edge of a precipice—that here was a band of insidious plotters, artfully leagued against his person and liberty. At this notion he would take fright and stay away a week, sometimes two; until, as they made no sign, and did not come with violence to storm him in his castle, he was much relieved, and came back of his own motion, with a sort of penitential air. Then he would find the loud cousin in firm possession, and feel a sort of curious resentment within himself for having given him such an advantage. Perhaps it was a diluted jealousy.

So he came and went, and stayed away, and came again; and all the while was growing rather fond of this white-faced girl. The sad-eyed parents looked on from afar, and let him have his way. They did not see into these things; they did not heed them. The pale-faced child did not consider him much in any light whatsoever—just tolerated him; but it is to be suspected, was seriously inclined to the boisterous cousin. So the thing went on, but growing, in some shape, all the while.

The wild comet still reached its perihelion occasionally, and flashed upon the horizon as usual; but latterly with a steadily increasing recurrence. Every six months there was some fresh disgrace—every month—and presently every fortnight, or so. And for all these rescues had to be found. By-and-by came bill transactions, ugly in cha-

racter, and all but reaching to an *exposé*, but happily warded off at a large sacrifice. There was no end to these trials. The worn face of the parent became yet more worn.

VI.

With her husband, also, things had not gone so prosperously of late. Real languid *insouciance* of affliction and *cœur brisé* does not do for the world of business. A heavy loss came, and he looked on insensibly. He set himself, without much exertion, to repair this casualty, and did not succeed. Thus was much capital being nibbled. After all, what was dross to the poor *cœur brisé*? He only followed the thing for distraction's sake. And so the money began to drip—drip away through his fingers—like so much water. One evening he told his wife quite plainly that they should have to live very sparingly now, and stint themselves a good deal; for that he had met with very heavy losses, and nearly all his money was gone—a statement which she accepted, with more trepidation and alarm than one would have expected from her dulled nature. But the fact was, at that moment it came most unfortunately, and she was thinking, not of herself, nor of that pale-faced girl, but of the wild, erratic comet, then gyrating with its most tremendous velocity, and committing the worst extravagances in its course. All along she had furnished secret supplies; fed its fires from her own private stores; pinched her own moderate expenses to have yet a greater surplus. And yet the drain seemed endless. It lay upon her as a tremendous weight, that this lost youth would one day break out into some great and indelible disgrace, such as would fix upon him the attention of the kingdom. And to avert some most horrible catastrophe, by evoking pecuniary emollients, was her pious aim. That destiny would bring such a thing about before the end came, she firmly believed; but her wish was to avert as long as possible what was to come inevitably. It was before her of nights; and disturbed even such unquiet dreams as she had. It made her restless during the day;

and, above all, she had to carry this about within her, unsupported—for her husband had troubles sufficient of his own: and, indeed, had the errors of this scapegrace never very glaringly laid open before him.

Thus it will be seen what curious elements were all working together simultaneously within the spick and span red-brick house, each in a channel of its own, and mostly unsuspected by the others. The father had his private tribulation—the mother hers; the visitor, his little bit of disquietude; and the pale-faced daughter, such sorrow as she found in her parents' sorrow.

It was found, after some fruitless efforts to retrieve his ill luck, that they had barely sufficient for a contracted existence, and that they must before the end of the year actually quit the staring brick house, and seek some more suitable residence.

On this there came a visible change in the pale-faced girl. She was gracious to the visitor; soothed his dudgeon; all but broke with the cousin. It looks doubtful, yet it came from the best of motives. She would save those she loved from shipwreck, at whatever risk or sacrifice. Cousins' loves must all go overboard when wreck is at hand.

VII.

At last it came to one gloomy evening in the month of misfortunes, November—or at least that month which supplies fitting scenery and furniture for troubles of all kinds—when the two are sitting in the shadow, each with their own private weight of care upon their hearts. Things were coming to a yet poorer pass. The world was using them, yet more and more cruelly still. Something like a catastrophe was impending over their heads, and could not be delayed more than a month or so. His was not the mind for a crisis, and therefore ill-suited to finding out a remedy. His was not a bold, fighting nature, that would struggle before it would die, but would surrender tamely, and without a blow.

To the door then comes the scarlet postman of the district, and a letter is brought. In troubled times all

letters bring evil news, or, at least, are expected to do so. This one was opened by Mrs. Joy, and read privately in her own chamber:

'MADAM,—I am sorry to be obliged to communicate to you so unpleasant a piece of intelligence as this letter contains, but it is better for you that you should learn the worst at once. A bill was presented to me for payment a few days since, bearing what appeared to be my own signature. I saw at once it was a forgery, and had no doubt whose was the hand that did it. As you are aware I had been obliged to discharge your son from my employment about a month ago; but he was very soon discovered, and admitted the charge.

'I have long hesitated between my duty to public justice and to friendship, as to what course I shall take in this matter. However, feeling for your situation acutely, and knowing that you have other troubles sufficient, I would be willing on receipt of the sum (150*l.*) to forego any further proceedings in the business. I hope it will be a lesson to the young man.

'The money I must have in a few days, as the bill must be taken up.

'I am, dear madam,

'Yours, &c.,

'JASPAR BROWN.'

This was a terrible stroke—both the moral blow, as well as the physical inconvenience. Moneys were not to be found now; and this was truly the last straw breaking the camel's back. And yet it did not come with such a shock; for previous misfortunes had toned them to a suitable frame of mind. And so they sat on, in the gloom of that miserable evening, without proposing remedy or relief, until their daughter, now out for some time, came in.

VIII.

She was nervous and shy, and somewhat flurried. She had a wonderful piece of news to break to them which she did almost joyfully. She had been out walking; had met Mr. Hengist, who had turned round and walked with her; had spoken with her seriously, and in that odd, jerky way of his had actually proposed to

her. He was very good, very generous, and all the rest of it; and she was sure in time she would come to like him. So for that night, at least, the angel of trouble folded up his wings. The clouds were dispersed, the mists and unwholesome damps of pecuniary embarrassment were shattered. There was jubilee in the bright brick house. Still, for the present, money was lacking; and though things pointed to the new bridegroom as deliverer, there came difficulties in the way which effectually cut off that hope of rescue. For this curious nature of Hengist was so strange and flighty, there was no knowing at what turn it would be scared and take flight. And in an early interview with the father, it was very soon apparent that this was dangerous ground. For when it was told to him, that no fortune could be offered to him with the girl, he fell into great disorder, and spoke of mistakes and misapprehensions, and finally said he had been deceived, and went his way, leaving them with the impression that all was over. There are rich men who think it due to their dignity that riches should be brought to them. So for three or four days he was not heard of; but then reappeared as usual, and made no further allusion to the money question. Then came another difficulty. From him had to be concealed the whole of the pecuniary difficulties; for he often made loud proclamation that he had a horror of bankrupt men and women—that such persons seemed to be decayed and mouldy, and to be eaten away with the leprosy of debt. He used to add, too, that he took such pride in his father-in-law being a sound, substantial man; and that hereafter they would one day join their capital and work wonders in the fiscal world. This was a favourite theme of his, and he laid out grand schemes sitting with them over the fire; and pointed with unutterable disgust to such and such a one who had broken down and failed. All the while they listened ruefully, and with a flutter at their hearts. Pity them we must, for they knew not where to turn: and the girl herself was wholly innocent, for they had been careful only

to let her know in a misty way of their embarrassments. Then there was another and last difficulty. For a few weeks, indeed, by desperate exertion, they might tide over the danger: but here was this man very slack indeed about his nuptials. He must have time to wind up his affairs. He must go up to the North to sell houses or lands; in short, there must be a couple of months, or six weeks at the least, before he could be ready. And his humour was so fretful; it was dangerous to press him much by way of remonstrance or argument. And by-and-by, he gave up that shiny brick house of his in the Terrace, meaning to take one in London—and went away, as he said, to wind up his affairs for matrimony.

IX.

The business of the scapegrace son had been tided, though temporarily, by the agency of a short bill at three weeks. Mr. Jasper Brown, a matter-of-fact, business man, had agreed to stay destiny by execution, for that brief span. But this they knew to be but a poor shift—a mere staying off, by the very frailest barrier. And though here, a sort of delivery was held out to them with one hand, there was a certain inevitable thunderbolt of destruction menacing them from the other. No possible mode of extrication could they discover. Poor suffering souls! Theirs was not the spirit of youth, fertile in devices, daring and vigorous. Misfortune had made them sluggish. And so they were hurried along through the gloom and shadows to the day of reckoning, for sins scarcely their own.

And the day of Joy, too, drew on with equal speed. Hengist, the bridegroom, reappears by-and-by, elated, buoyant, having wound up all things, but more than ever repugnant to broken, bankrupt men. Joyful too was the girl, for she saw deliverance from these gloomy times close at hand—deliverance for herself and parents. Dark care sat beside them alone, and yet they told not of the Nemesis that hung over them. And so the days wore on.

All this time the future bridegroom stopped with them, for his home

was gone, and he was shrewd and saving, like all rich men. He had the best bedroom, and was made much of, as was only fitting—at least for the short span the thing would hold out to. Often he said to his future father, regretfully, 'Could you not make me out some little money—say five hundred pounds—three—two—one hundred?' And the other had to take refuge in some poor weak pretence about a vow, and about all coming to her eventually, after his death. And the marriage-day was now good three weeks away, and Nemesis but a day or two!

From Jasper Brown delay had been begged, nay, implored, in piteous letters from Mrs. Joy. Which procedure rather fortified that gentleman in his stern denials; all humblings and self-abasements in money matters being, as is well known, the most fatal instruments. They are confessions of weakness and danger. In a stiff letter Jasper Brown buttoned up his pockets and refused an hour's delay. He was astounded at such ingratitude; disgusted, perhaps, at a man reputed wealthy breaking up so disreputably. The law should take its course. Not an hour—not an hour. Nemesis advancing slowly.

X.

Of a Saturday evening Mrs. Joy is sitting dismally over her fire; the others have gone out, and will be in by dinner-time. A weary Saturday; always a day of battle, of siege, of expostulation and entreaty. The gates and approaches were now tolerably clear, and Mrs. Joy sitting over her fire. Suddenly a knock, and she draws a deep sigh, for she knows here is yet another battle to fight, when she thought all was over for the day. She goes out wearily on the old errand, and is face to face with two shabby, scrubby fellows, whose type proclaims itself even to those who have never before been acquainted with it. The flaming red muffler and heavy sticks were sufficient. We know this sort of men, and their errand. So did the poor woman then, without the aid of that fluttering piece of paper. They were sheriffs' men, and, they were

now in possession. These were civil and considerate fellows on the whole, and gave no pain in working out their dirty work.

Her wits nearly deserted her at the first, then came back to her with an extraordinary force and vitality. What *was* to be done? What *could* be done? Time but a few minutes; for they might return at any moment. Servant abroad, in garden or yard, so that exposure was happily spared. At this moment not a soul in the house but she herself and those earthy emissaries. And there was twenty pounds or thereabouts—about as much use as twenty pence;—a mere scrap. *But there was more money than that in the house!* There was absolutely no help near. The very sight of those sheriff's aides-de-camp—in their drab uniform—waiting in the hall, scared her. The bare notion of that process of the law maketh the heart sink; and praying to these coarse emissaries for a few moments' grace, she fled away, shrinking, fluttering, and almost gasping with terror, to her own room, there to strive desperately and see if anything in the world *could* suggest itself. At such a crisis, hemmed up into a moral corner, with such cruel wolves at the gate, no wonder if the wildest, even the most unlawful thoughts of extrication suggested themselves importunately. Some one had received moneys for sale of interest in lease—or lands—and had gone to London too late for banking hours, and had brought his moneys back, and had surely not taken them out with him on his walk. They were lying, in all probability, up stairs in that leathern case of his, in the best bedroom—good yellow gold and notes. We must not judge this poor broken soul too harshly. Think of the two figures before her, now masters of the house; think of the foul associations connected with such ministers; think of those who were walking home with sure steps, and perhaps now not a hundred yards away; think of the fair marriage hanging on a thread; think of black despair at her heart, clouding her eyes, and senses, and moral conscience; think of these things, and let us pity—if

we must condemn—that poor frail creature now stealing up stairs.

XI.

There, the air is cleared; the foul sheriffs' ministers are gone; but not a minute too soon, for here return the trio from their walk, two very gay and cheerful. That evening passes by; so does the Sunday morning, and public worship, at which all attend. Not until the noon of Sunday does Mr. Hengist come tearing down from his room crying aloud that he has been robbed; that he is undone; that he is ruined; that he will bring every one to justice.

There is the usual *eclandre* and hubbub. Policemen enter; search, and inspect, and inquire. Three hundred pounds nearly. It is a heavy loss. On whom does suspicion naturally rest in such cases? On the servants. Call them up: and some wretched trembling Susan, or Mary Jane, is brought in and put to the question. She cries and sobs—circumstances of strong suspicion. Strange to say the box had been neatly opened with a false key; but no key could be found. Still there was nothing beyond suspicion, until in the passage leading to the kitchen, or scullery, or outhouse was found just such a little Bramah key, which Mrs. Joy identified as hers. This was enough; and Susan or Mary Jane was led away disgracefully in custody.

All this while Mrs. Joy said not a word, looking quite stony and immovable. Her eyes had a cold, glassy stare. She was as that Nemesis of whom we have been speaking. She was determined to go through with her part, whatever she had undertaken. And she did it bravely; for it is a painful and unpleasant thing to have such a scene in a respectable family. Then when all was over, and the purloining maid taken away, she passed up stairs to her own room.

Hengist was nigh to being distracted, and sat at the fire moaning over his lost treasures. Mr. Joy took his daughter into another room, and told her wearily of what she had not known before. He was tired of the struggle, he said. It must end in

a day or two. He could fight it off no longer. It was better that she should know all at once. This unfortunate business of the robbery would finish it. To-morrow, he saw, would bring the end. She was much confounded at such speeches, yet soothed him affectionately, telling him that all would yet be well. He was to cheer up, and all would yet be well. Ah! vain, but fond speech! There is a day when all will yet be well—yet how far away.

She trips off, and passes into the parlour, where there is the other still moaning over his lost ingots. She sets herself to soothe him, humouring him, encouraging him with hope that they will be found. He is at first sour and pettish. But it is hard to resist that sweet face and voice. It was this man's bent of mind to be cheerful, and before very long she had brought him to be tranquil, to say, what did he care for a few guineas? that he had plenty more as good; with other speeches to the same tune.

Then on this favourable basis she went something further. She brought him to remark what dismal downcast faces her parents bore, and to ask what sorrows troubled them. Gently she broke it all to him, saying it in a sweet voice, telling him even of that immediate danger which was to come to-morrow. 'It is better,' she said, 'that you should know these things now than later; I myself have only learnt it this evening. I thought we were rich and flourishing; it has turned out otherwise. It is not fair to you that you should enter into our family not knowing of these things; and therefore it is only right that you should be set free.'

Hengist was much astonished at this straightforward proposal. That it should have come from him, he could understand; but from her, it was utterly incomprehensible. He was troubled. At first he almost thought there must be something behind, some little plot or deception. Then he became aggrieved. Why did she treat him in this way?—what had he done? It has been mentioned that his was a very curious nature; not very firm or vigorous, and full of contradiction.

Presently he had forgotten his money losses, and had fallen into a generous mood, and was ready even to furnish such aid as might ward off present difficulties.

XII.

With a light heart she flew to her father. He took it placidly: he was past any violent emotions of joy or sorrow. 'You have saved us,' he said; 'you are an angel. But run now and tell your poor mother; she is in her room up-stairs, and takes this to heart more than any of us.' The angel kissed her father's pale forehead, and bade him be of good heart. 'We shall all be very happy together yet,' she said; 'bright days are in store for us.' And she glided away very softly up stairs. That sweet-sounding but delusive anthem has been sung over and over again. The night of troubles in this instance was passing away, and it did seem fairly open to them to suppose that here a glimmer of dawn was breaking. It was likely they were all going to be very happy.

From many weary and wakeful nights it was natural that the poor woman of sorrows up stairs should be seeking a little rest during the daytime. And so her daughter entered cautiously and on tiptoe, fearing to disturb her. It was growing on to very dark, and through the window came but a half light. No doubt she was sleeping profoundly. And yet dark as it was there was light to perceive that on the table lay a letter or packet newly folded and directed. There are occasions when there will be a chain of arguments in the sight of a straw; and a sudden instinct made her turn to the bed where the dark shadowy figure was lying, in her daily dress, so profoundly still and motionless, that—

She darted to the bedside, and then she saw it all.

Now we can guess at the secret of that crowd of unwashed waiting outside the railing of the bright red house on that Monday morning. The coroner came that day; and his jury came; and policemen came. There was not much investigation needed.

There was the unfailing little phial, with the strange scent; and the doctor came and told *his* story. It was very clear. The packet, however, was not submitted to those intelligent persons, for it contained a confession so piteous and dismal—the last outpouring of a heart broken, and a spirit crushed. Well might the old formula of insanity—tempo-

rary or not—be read in the daily papers; often but a fiction soothing to afflicted relatives, but in this instance to be regarded with all indulgence. Decayed and deserted, the whole story may be now read in that tenement itself! A blight has seized it, and I do not believe that any projected marriage ever took place.

London Societies.

No. II.—A CONVERSAZIONE AT WILLIS'S ROOMS.

THE ARTISTS' AND AMATEURS' SOCIETY.

THE 'Artists' and Amateurs' is perhaps not the most brilliant of London societies; nor are its conversazioni more remarkable for vivacity and éprit than other entertainments of the kind. But as the last of that society's 'evenings' takes place this month (May), and will not be resumed till next winter, now or never must they be immortalized. Besides they do happen to have one distinguishing merit of their own, viz., variety. They are not mere mobs of fine ladies and gentlemen: lovely Belgravian nymphs, 'a little squeezed, but very charming,' on the right; used-up swells on the left; fashionable dowagers behind, and more fashionable dowagers in front—all exactly like the nymphs, swells, and dowagers you met last night at Lady Lionne's, and exactly like, if not actually the same, you will meet to-morrow at Mrs. Bageni's soirée. No! Here, at least, is individuality; and without being guilty of the horrible vulgarity of quizzing, one may be excused a smile at the odd characters brought together for the professed worship of Art. There is no great blaze of beauty: the shaded lamps and far-off chandeliers of nearly a century's bygone fashion give but a subdued tone to the fairest complexions. Neither are there many exquisite toilets. The few ladies of *ton*, who graciously walk through the rooms (on their way to some more congenial scene) almost

invariably enshroud themselves in their flowing burnouse, which leaves the splendid butterfly within wholly to the imagination. Not that there is any lack of gorgeous apparel either. My friend Stipple, who stands high in his profession, and whose *forte* is colour, brings his wife in a scarlet opera cloak, pale pink dress, and magenta and yellow flowers in her hair, which is—ahem! auburn, *bright* auburn. How is it that my friend Stipple can gaze complacently, even admiringly, on his womankind arrayed thus, when the same arrangement in a picture would put him in a positive frenzy? This couple belong to a class who thoroughly enjoy such entertainments. They come so early, that I am almost tempted to believe they don't *come* at all, but bivouac in the rooms from one conversazione to another. They shake hands with their acquaintances repeatedly during the evening, and accompany them severally on each occasion to the refreshment-room, where their experience on the subject of tea and thin bread and butter *versus* coffee (?) and biscuit becomes valuable. When Stipple lends the society one of his 'works,' it is delightful to see Mrs. S. hovering continually round it, smiling benignly on those who remark favourably upon it, and becoming as suddenly offensive in her manner towards less discriminating individuals—I must add, to

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EDWARD IV. FORTING CHURCH.
RECEPTIONS AT WILLIS'S ROOMS.



Drawn by Florence Claxton.

-----ALONE AT WILLIS'S ROOMS.

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the confusion of all parties. These persons, with a fair sprinkling of 'country cousins,' who have been presented with tickets, and who think an old country ball-dress just the thing to appear in at a London *soirée*; half a dozen picture-dealers, and a score or two of quiet nobodies, fill the rooms more than comfortably from nine to half-past ten, after which hour the crowd rapidly thins; and I, in concert with a few more misanthropical old gentlemen, prepare to enjoy the *chefs-d'œuvre* on the little easels placed round the walls. I suppose no one wishes to obtain my opinion on the handling of this, or the *chiaroscuro* of that work of art. No one would take the least interest in the conflict between M'Kewan and Richardson in my mind; nor can I disguise from myself the melancholy fact that the British public would probably consider itself bored by any lengthened critique of mine: therefore, in a literary point of view, I hail cabby, and make the best of my way home. But, first, is there any explanation of the engraving on the following page necessary? That little artist stooping over the portfolio stand, for instance, what is there to be said of him, save that his hair, his coat, his boots, his general tournure, cry aloud, 'a person not in society?' That strong-minded looking lady next him is undeniably a member of

the same profession; but I object to her myself as conventional. Why should people refuse to recognize the 'female artist' unless so cruelly caricatured? She is introduced, no doubt, as a foil to that pretty creature in the centre holding the opera-glass; she who has ventured under the wing of her mamma and elder sister so far into Vanity Fair. Further in the shade, I see a young Israelite has affably addressed a couple of swells, whose names you may be sure are enrolled among the hon. members. They are grandly amazed at the presumption of the 'confounded little snob,' who is good-naturedly letting them 'behold the seeds' of picture dealing, and who will dexterously insinuate a card into one or both of their waistcoat pockets before he suffers them to escape. 'Cub dowl to our place id Wardour Street. Fide old basters from sisks poundsh: cub ad see,' methinks I hear proceeding from his lips. As for the bo-flounced lady in the foreground, she is evidently one of those profound connoisseurs who 'adore painting and genius, and all that sort of thing, you know,' but would feel faint at the bare 'ide-aw' of bowing to an artist, which reminds me it is time to make my obeisance to the readers of 'London Society,' and retire into private life until next month.



OPERATIC NOTES AND ANECDOTES.

PART II.

CAFFARELLI followed in London to Farinelli—a vain and capricious fellow—only in self-esteem equal to his predecessor. When told on one occasion that it was not thought possible any singer could please after Farinelli, the coxcomb exclaimed to a royal highness: ‘To-night you shall hear two Farinellis.’

At sixty-five Caffarelli was still singing, but he was thrifty as well as musical, for he not only coined his notes into sterling moneys, but he had the good sense to husband his coinage. He made an enormous fortune, purchased a dukedom for his nephew, and raised a palace for himself, with the inscription on its front:

‘Amphion Thebas, ego domum.’

‘Amphion’s voice and mine win like renown,
My notes this palace built, and his Thebes’ town.’

Beneath this vain-glorious parallel a wag wrote—

‘Ille cum, sine tu.’

‘Amphion’s Thebes, with thine compare not it,
Thebes showed his wit, thy Thebes thy want of wit.’

Guadagni was another celebrated singer in succession to Caffarelli. He sang in London in 1766, and amassed during his career a large fortune, which he used generously in the relief of distress. He professed to lend, in order not to wound sensibility, but he virtually gave. ‘I only want it as a loan,’ said an impoverished gentleman on one occasion, whom he had accommodated with a considerable sum. ‘That is not my intention,’ replied the singer, ‘if I wanted it back, I should not lend it to you.’

Gabrielli, a prima donna, ‘the most dangerous siren of modern times,’ in 1763 went to St. Petersburg, on the invitation of Catherine II. When the empress inquired what terms the singer expected, she named the sum of five thousand ducats.

‘Not one of my field marshals receives so much,’ said the empress.

‘Her Majesty had better ask her field marshals to sing,’ replied the undaunted Gabrielli.

The singer carried her point, and gained her wage.

Madame Mara, of Berlin, follows in almost direct succession to the last-named lady: less fortunate, however, in the sovereign she had to deal with, for Frederick the Great was as absolute on the stage as on the throne. Before she was patronized by that German *re assoluto*, he expressed his disgust at her pretensions, having been furnished with the report that she sang like a German, as well she might do, being a daughter of Herr Schmaling, of Berlin. To his very refined and flute-playing Majesty, all of whose tastes were formed on French models, the neighing of a horse was as agreeable as the singing of a German. Having conquered, however, a place in the king’s patronage, she practised all the airs and caprices common to singers from Horace’s time till now: ‘Omnibus hoc vitium cantoribus.’ She would only sing when she was inclined. On one occasion when the Cesarewitch was in Berlin, she was ordered to take the principal part in the opera for the prince’s entertainment; but my lady was indisposed and pettish. She could not go, she was ill. Frederick sent her word that she had better get well in time, for sing she should—will she, nill she. Two hours before the hour of commencing the performance, a carriage drove up to her door, escorted by dragoons, the officer of whom said he came to escort her to the theatre.

‘But you see I am in bed, and cannot get up,’ remonstrated the vocalist.

‘In that case I must take the bed too,’ was the curt reply.

Madame Mara made a grace of necessity, and sang, after a pretty pout or two, with all possible brilliancy, charming Slavonic ears, and probably pocketing some Slavonic roubles.

Madame Mara, after this exploit, was well known in London and Paris. Her rivalry at the latter city with Madame Todi, gave rise to the following wretched joke:—

'Quelle est la meilleure?'

'C'est Mara.'

'C'est bientôt dit (bien Todi).'

Something better in the shape of verse appears to the following effect:

'Todi, par sa voix touchante,
De doux pleurs mouille mes yeux;
Mara plus vive, plus brillante,
M'étonne, me transporte aux cieux.
L'une ravit, et l'autre enchante,
Mais celle qui plait le mieux
Est toujours celle qui chante.'

She sang at the second Handel Festival, in 1785, in Westminster Abbey.

On the King's Theatre having been burned to the ground in 1789, not without strong suspicion of having been maliciously set on fire, the company moved to the little theatre in the Haymarket, and eventually to the Pantheon, 'the largest and most beautiful room in London,' fitted up with a stage and accommodation for the public. Unsuccessful in a pecuniary point of view—for the first season accumulated a debt of 30,000*l.*—the enterprise was nevertheless, in the sense of pleasing the public, a success. But the theatre was small and the expenses heavy. Madame Mara was here prima donna. She died at last on the Continent, at an advanced age, in no good circumstances.

Madame Banti was the next great celebrity in this country of female singers. She was gifted with a sweet voice, but had no musical science, nor would she submit to the drudgery of practice. In a fit of inadvertence or carelessness, when singing in public, she would execute an air through the first part faultlessly well, and then, instead of proceeding to the second part, would begin the first, and repeat it more than once, warbling over the same set of notes as innocently of wrong intention as a bird.

When this child of nature died, at forty-nine years of age, she bequeathed her larynx, one of extraordinary size, to the municipality of Bologna (all she had to leave them),

and there it is duly preserved in a glass bottle.

Our English Billington was as celebrated at home and abroad as her contemporary Banti. When Mrs. Billington was at one time on the stage at Naples, the gross superstition of the audience led them to charge the foreign heretic with causing the violent eruption of Vesuvius, which occurred during the performance; but the mountain behaving better before the performance was done, the audience changed their opinion, and applauded the heretic player freely, notwithstanding her misbelief.

Braham appeared at the beginning of the present century—Braham, well recollected by most readers of our magazine, gifted with a voice of the finest quality, and yet not always governed by the best taste in the use of it.

All voices of men and women alike were eclipsed by that of Catalani, who in 1806 reigned in English song without a rival. Her voice was beautiful, energetic, expressive, 'uniting the delicious flexibility of Sontag to the three registers of Malibran.' Brilliancy was her merit as a performer; covetousness (but this she shared with most pets of the public, even tragic Rachel, and others) her great fault and demerit. How she and others like-minded with herself could imagine that impresarii could list and pay other performers is rather hard to conjecture. Her terms, proposed by her husband to Ebers of the King's Theatre, in 1826, were, that she should share half the gross receipts of every performance, while the lessee should pay out of the other half the rent of the theatre, the performers' salaries, the tradespeople's bills—and, in short, every expense. One can readily understand how, by such a scheme as this, the exorbitant Madame should net 10,000*l.* in London in a season of four months, and as much more in a subsequent tour in the provinces, in Scotland, and Ireland. Much of her earnings it must, nevertheless, be added, she dispensed in charities like the Swedish Nightingale of our more immediate day.

Since its earliest adventure in the metropolis of England, Italian opera has maintained its ground with more or less of perseverance—the most costly theatre, the most brilliant performers, the most astounding remuneration for artistes being ever found here. But the ridiculously high rate of wages for stars, paid in London alone of all the cities of Europe, has made the enterprise of keeping open a King's Theatre most hazardous to the lessee, and more frequently ruinous than remunerative. The history of the opera thus becomes with us a history of bankruptcies rather than of art—of penalties for trying to please the public rather than of rewards for success in doing so.

The expense of the opera can only be met by royal or imperial purses; hence this costly kind of entertainment thrives best where monarchs directly patronize it with subsidy and countenance. In London, its exclusiveness, arising from its absurd regulations respecting dress—which we know by personal experience do not prevail in France or Russia—and its high prices, will never, perhaps, make it a profitable commercial undertaking; while at the same time, it is by many causes thrown amongst us beyond the precincts or direct influence of the court. Besides, the repertoire of opera will never admit of the variety of the theatre—good and popular operas being, like the singers thereof, too rare to admit of much diversity or frequent changes of performance. The enormous expense entailed on lessee and manager, moreover, by the *mise en scène* of each successive play—that of ‘*Les Huguenots*,’ for instance, not remarkable for display, in the French *Théâtre des Italiens*, being upwards of 60,000*l.*—forbids the variety for which the middle-class public craves. Hence with us opera can scarcely be called popular in its proper sense (although highly appreciated by its *habitués* and the higher classes), and as a speculation has been too commonly ruinous to the enterprising but infatuated men who have brought the foreign sons and daughters of song to our shores.

Taylor, the proprietor in 1793, Waters, Ebers, with the successive managers since, have all been made bankrupts, or impoverished by their enterprise; not from lack of spirit and adventure, but, as it would seem, from inevitable fate. Taylor spent much of the time of his management within the rules of the King's Bench prison.

‘How can you conduct the affairs of the King's Theatre,’ asked a friend one day, ‘perpetually in durance as you are?’

‘My dear fellow,’ he replied, ‘how could I possibly conduct them if I were at liberty? I should be eaten up, sir—devoured.’ Taylor died in prison.

Waters, his partner, succeeded him, buying the whole concern out and out, by direction of the Chancellor, in 1816, for less than 3,000*l.* Ill success drove Waters to the protection of a foreign residence. But his interest in the theatre was bought up, with a frantic mania for speculation such as never fails to attend all its vicissitudes, for 80,000*l.*; so that Waters made more by giving it up than any proprietor ever gained by retaining it. Ebers, who managed it from 1821 to 1828, lost every year, deeming himself fortunate that the deficit of his last year, being less than that of every other, should have been only 3,000*l.*

The more recent history of the house requires neither detail nor comment.

As little call is there for a discussion of the merits of modern composers or singers: Rossini, with his floridity and sweetness, whose choice ‘*Barber of Seville*’ was nevertheless hissed at Rome, on the first night of its performance; Meyerbeer, with his decidedly German cast of thought; Donizetti, the graceful, melodious, and sentimental in style; and Bellini, the author of ‘*The Sonnambula*,’ the ‘*Norma*,’ and the ‘*Puritani*,’ works of undying popularity and interest. Auber, of Paris, belongs to a totally different school from these; while Germany in successful opera has not been fertile.

Of all modern musicians, Rossini is the unquestionable chief. The entire form of the opera during the last

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half-century has been remoulded by him. To him we owe the accompanying of the recitativo by a full band; the complete musical setting of dialogue; his rich finales; his making basses and baritones as eligible for first parts as tenors; and the important part he assigns to the chorus according to the nature of some of the plots of his plays. Mozart, indeed, led the way in many of these things, but Rossini gave them prominence, permanence, and development.

Finales once were nothing; now that of 'Don Giovanni' requires fifteen minutes for its execution; that of 'The Barber of Seville' twenty-one; that of 'Othello' twenty-four; that of 'The Gazza Ladra' twenty-seven; and that of 'The Semiramide' half an hour.

Singers, musicians, and dancers have been a witty, humorous, and self-willed, as well as an ingenious race. Collections of their bon mots are common; we quote one or two. The notorious Sophia Arnauld of Paris, said of Mademoiselle Guimard, the dancer, who was very thin and light—'This skinny little silkworm ought to be fatter, considering the very fat leaf she feeds upon,' referring to one of the French bishops who was professedly the admirer of the ballerina.

When Mademoiselle Laguerre appeared one evening on the stage as *Iphigenie*, she was beyond mistake intoxicated. 'Ah!' interjected the lively Sophia, 'this is not *Iphigenie* in Tauris, but *Iphigenie* in Champagne.'

When this witty lady had grown old, and continued to sing, a certain brute of an abbé declared 'she had the finest asthma he had ever heard.'

Of Larrivé, the French singer, who sang overmuch through his nose, it was customary to say, 'That nose has really a magnificent voice.'

One of Rubini's earliest achievements in song, was the high B flat, for which wonderful note his audience used to listen with intense excitement, and always encore it when heard. Once he failed in his attempt—*vox faucibus hæsit*. He made a prodigious effort to rescue

his endangered laurels, and conquered the reluctant notes, but at some damage to his physique. Nature rebelled against the attempt, and the singer snapped his clavicle.

'How long would it take to mend it?' asked he of the doctor.

'Two months, if you remained perfectly quiet during that time.'

'Two months! Can a person live comfortably with a broken clavicle?'

'Very comfortably indeed. If you take care not to lift heavy weights, you will experience no disagreeable effects.'

'Ah! there is my cue,' exclaimed Rubini, 'I will go on singing.'

And so he did; Rubini, the man in London, as well as Rubini, the youth in Milan, sang with a broken clavicle.

'Ah, little they thought as they thrilled to his strains

That the clav. of the minstrel was broken.'

Rubini was fortunate that it was no worse with him. Fabris in St. Carlo, and Labitte at Lyons, both died on the stage in consequence of their vocal exertions. But from the occasional ages mentioned in our paper, vocalists will be found to be by no means a short-lived race.

If the strength of muscular action is shown in this anecdote, that of vocal action appears in the feat of Chéron, the celebrated French bass, who was able to burst a tumbler into a thousand pieces by sounding within the glass a particular note. With the wonderful resonance of the late Lablache, his singing in a greenhouse at the full pitch of his enormous voice might have endangered its stability.

Farinelli's success originally owing to his one great note, is amusingly parodied in the burlesque comedy of the 'Saltem Banques,' wherein one of the characters practises on a trombone, but can only succeed in producing one note. His friend encourages him by saying, 'Never mind, one note is enough; keep on playing it, and people who are fond of that note will be delighted.'

Caffarelli hearing of Farinelli's success at Madrid, expressed a professional estimate of artistic merits.

'He deserves to be prime minister; he has an admirable voice.'

Napoleon Bonaparte was as arbitrary with singers as Frederick the Great, and more successful in his measures. At Dresden, in 1806, he laid his embargo on the best artistes of the King of Saxony's opera, and took them away by force.

'You sing divinely,' said he to the prima donna, Madame Paer; 'what do they give you at this theatre?'

'Fifteen thousand francs, sire.'

'You shall receive thirty. M. Brizzi, you shall follow me on the same terms.'

'But we are engaged.'

'With me. You see the affair is quite settled.'

Napoleon took away with him in this curt, kingly fashion, the whole opera from the Saxon city, to follow the fortunes of war, and attend him in his camp.

This style of procedure has succeeded in enlisting many singers, but the members of the ballet have always shown more independence.

Madeline Guimard, forced on the stage by the Minister of the Police, exclaimed: 'The minister desires me to dance,—eh, bien qu'il y prenne garde, je pourrais bien le faire sauter.'

Vestris, the elder, had a due appreciation of his consequence. When his son had offended the court by refusing to dance on some occasion, he was magniloquently reproved by his father in these terms:—

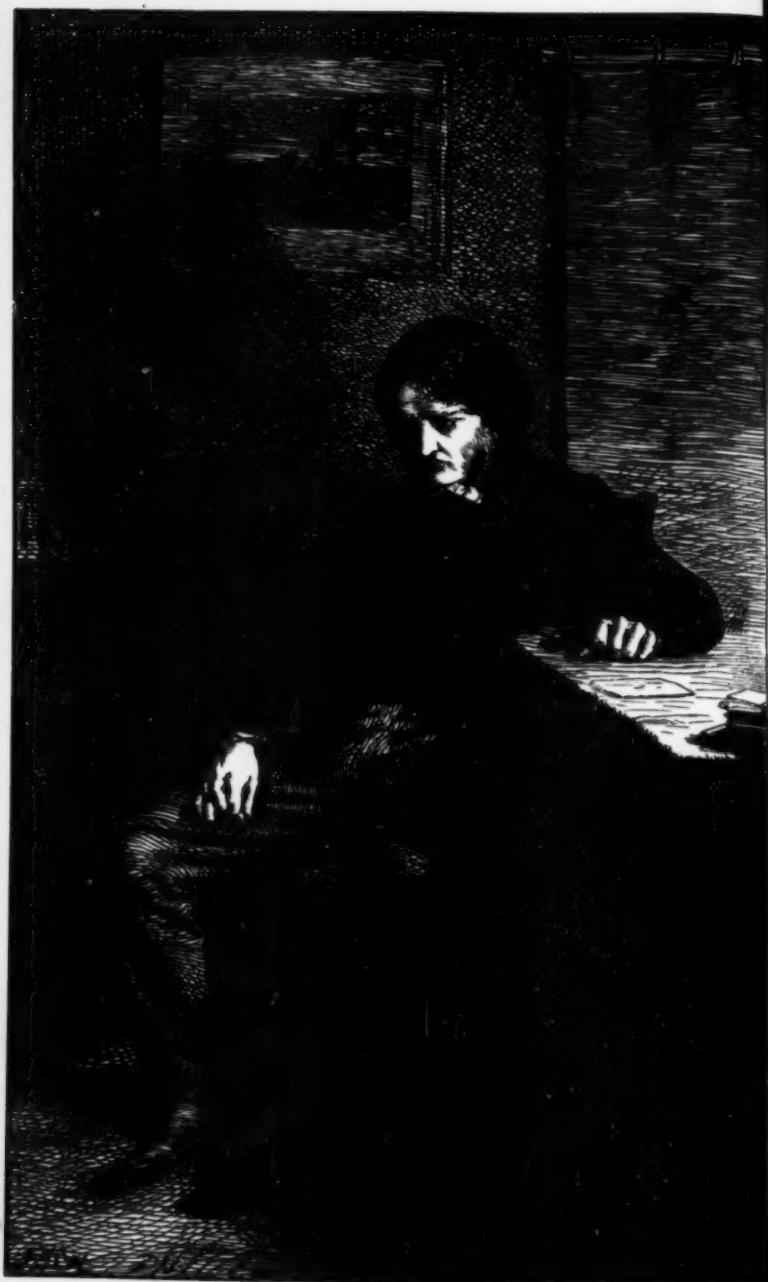
'I will have no misunderstanding between the house of Vestris and the house of Bourbon; they have hitherto always lived on good terms.'

This is almost as fine as that of Rameau, when offered a patent of nobility by Louis XV. 'Letters of nobility to me? *Castor and Dardanus* gave them to me long ago!'



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Drawn by J. D. Watson.

ROMANCE AND A CURACY.

p. 309.

LONDON SOCIETY.

JUNE, 1887.

ROMANCE AND REALITY.

A TALE IN TWO VOLUMES.

CHAPTER I.

IT was a pleasant room enough, considering that it was above the street square; the lower windows might have been a little better, but the little less like an attic. The room commanded a fine view of the city, and the view was a very good one, and there was a very good view of the city beyond. Altogether it did well enough for the lodging of a poor man.

At present there were two persons decidedly one too many—in the room—a stout, bald gentleman, who had struggled to the bow window, and sat there panting; and the other, himself, who was not bald, nor stout, nor panting.

And the stout gentleman was saying, 'So, you wouldn't change positions; even with me?—the stoutest of them all, Thorpe?'

No, Dr. Grant, I wouldn't. The gloss has not worn off my black coat yet.'

It has been rubbed pretty hard, was the response.

Ha! You should look out for a living, Thorpe.'

To which the Rev. Martin Thorpe made no answer.

There are so many of you, however, you must not all be such cures. Lady Anne has just told me that all the cures are your cures.'

Indeed!

Yes. You see she makes an assertion—No. V.

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Engraved by J. D. Watson.

p. 104

ROMANCE AND A CURACY.

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